

even when



TOWER TIDINGS

WINTER 2025/2026



CELEBRATING ALL THAT GOD IS DOING AT PCM

Reverend Daniel Vigilante, Pastor

Dear PCM Family,

There's an unmistakable energy around our church. It happens this time every year, of course - as the long-awaited season draws near - and the plans dreamed up months ago start falling into place. Advent is about preparation - and we are ready! PCM is living deeply into its purpose, **to create opportunities for people to experience Christ's love...** and I can't wait to tell you about what's unfolding! In this issue of Tower Tidings:

- Audrey introduces our Advent Devotional - and shares what this year's Advent theme, *Even When*, is all about.
- Alexandra, Caleigh, and Jeanne provide great ideas for celebrating the season with children and youth. One of the things I'm most excited about is Alexandra's new class for parents and grandparents - it's a wonderful opportunity for grownups to connect, with tips on how to reinforce the weekly Sunday school lessons at home.
- John Harmon gives us a preview of *The Forum on the Green* - kicking off in January 2026. I truly encourage you to read his article - and to spread the word about this inspired and impactful new series!
- Sue Woodruff helps us remember PCM's rich history - and the important work church volunteers are doing to preserve it.
- Amanda does what she does best - communicating our mission to love first - and inviting us to "show up" for our neighbors in tangible ways. Speaking of which...
- There's a section on serving those outside our walls (with Outreach) and those inside, as well (with our Livestream Team). You can read about opportunities for fellowship and learning, find updates from our Vision Team and Finance Committee, and mark your calendars for all of the awesome events beginning in the new year!
- Finally, once again, 100% of our Christmas Eve offering will go to Jan's Closet, PCM's free community clothing bank. Your generosity last year was nothing short of miraculous - and has been used to purchase necessities like underwear and socks and to install permanent hanging racks and shelving - elevating the experience for our guests and volunteers alike. But the needs are still great, and more people are visiting Jan's Closet than ever before. Do you think we can be as generous this year?

Friends, around our church, the air feels charged - alive with possibility. So what if the weeks ahead weren't just a stretch of calendar squares to survive - but a whole season of celebrating all that God is doing!

In Christ's love,
Daniel

THIS ADVENT SEASON

Come experience the wonder of Advent with PCM.

NOV 30

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT: HOPE

ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICES

8:00 am Chapel | 10:00 am Sanctuary and Online

November 30, December 7, 14, and 21. Join us as we prepare for the birth of Jesus Christ.

DEC 7

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT: PEACE

CHRISTMAS BRUNCH AND SANTA COLLECTION PROGRAM

11:30 am - 1:00 pm | Parish House

Celebrate the joy of the Christmas season! This special event, sponsored by Presbyterian Women, is open to all church members and friends – individuals, families, and children!

DEC 14

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT: JOY

CAROLS AND COCOA:

OUTDOOR COMMUNITY SINGALONG

4:00 pm | Parish House

Get ready to ring in the holiday season at our annual “Cocoa and Carols” outdoor singalong.

DEC 21

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT: LOVE

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE AND DINNER

5:00 pm | The Chapel

A contemplative and reflective gathering that takes place on the winter solstice, designed to provide solace and support for those who find this a difficult time of the year.

DEC 24

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE | 4:00 PM

4:00 pm | The Sanctuary and Online

All-ages worship service featuring our annual Christmas Pageant and children’s choirs. All children are welcome to participate!

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE | 8:00 PM

8:00 pm | The Sanctuary and Online

A beautiful, intimate candlelight service featuring the Chancel Choir and Chancel Ringers!



EVEN WHEN

Reverend Audrey Webber, Associate Pastor

Dear Friends,

This Advent, our devotional is rooted in a simple but profound affirmation of faith: **“I believe... even when.”**

These words come from a powerful text discovered on the wall of a cellar where a Jewish person was hiding during World War II. In a time of terror, silence, and fear, someone etched out a fragile but courageous confession:

**“I believe in the sun even when it’s not shining.
I believe in love even when I don’t feel it.
I believe in God even when He is silent.”**

Composer Mark A. Miller later set these words to music, and many have been moved by the story behind the text, a reminder that faith often takes root in the deepest shadows. Belief does not wait for certainty. It begins before the light returns.

Advent is exactly that kind of season, a season of holy waiting, longing, and trusting even when we cannot yet see the fullness of God’s promise.

To help us explore this spiritual posture, we invited several of our new elders on Session to write reflections for this devotional. Each elder chose one of the Advent themes and wrote through the lens of “I believe... even when”:

- **Hope:** even when I don’t feel it
- **Peace:** even when I don’t feel it
- **Joy:** even when I don’t feel it
- **Love:** even when I don’t feel it
- **The Son:** even when I don’t feel Him
- And finally: **Believe This:** The Time Has Come

Across these pages, you’ll find reflections growing out of real life: wilderness places of grief, unexpected moments of stillness and peace, surprising breaks of joy, the quiet persistence of love, and the courage to believe in Christ’s presence even when we do not feel it.

Each writer approaches faith with honesty, acknowledging what is difficult while pointing toward the God who meets us in those “even when” moments.

A Prayer for the Journey: As you read, may these reflections create space: for hope, for rest, for courage, and for renewal. And may you discover again this Advent that **God is near, God is faithful, and God’s light is already on the way, even when.**

I BELIEVE IN HOPE, EVEN WHEN I DON'T FEEL IT



Pam Trovato | Elder, Stewardship and Nominating Committee

Advent One | November 30 | Mark 1:1-15

Mark's Gospel opens not with comfort or certainty, but with a voice crying out in an empty place — "Prepare the way of the Lord." It's a reminder that the Good News often begins before we can see it, before we can feel it. We hope it's there. We believe it's there.

After reading this passage, I felt a deep connection to that wilderness. Since my father's passing, hope sometimes feels like a faint light behind heavy clouds. My faith hasn't disappeared, but it has become quieter. There are moments when God feels silent and the world feels dim. And yet, every Sunday, as I walk into church, I feel something stir within me.

I can almost see my father — standing at the door with his gentle smile, greeting people, singing hymns he knew by heart. That's where I find hope — in the echoes of his voice, in the warmth of community, in the rhythm of service. When I help during worship, when I sing a familiar hymn, when I simply show up, I feel connected to both my dad and to God. It's the hope I feel at PCM that heals my heart when it aches to hear my father's voice one last time. There is hope within each passing day, a quiet faith that my family's hearts will continue to heal from the pain of loss.

Even when I don't feel it, I believe. Because I've seen what faith looks like — in my father's steady devotion, in the life of the church, in the wilderness that somehow becomes a sacred space. The Gospel reminds me that hope doesn't wait for the light to shine — it begins right here, in the believing, in the serving, in the trusting that love never truly leaves us.

Prayer:

Loving God, when our hearts feel heavy and hope seems far away, remind us that You are still near. Help us to believe in hope, even when we don't feel it — to trust that Your light is still shining on the darkest days. Your love still holding, and Your grace still guiding us through. Amen.



I BELIEVE IN PEACE, EVEN WHEN I DON'T FEEL IT

Bill Crean | Elder, Worship and Music Committee

Advent Two | John 1:1-18

Peace is a relatable word – until life gets loud. Some days it feels like everyone else sails calm seas while we're stuck in choppy water. John acknowledges this and gives us hope: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." He doesn't deny the darkness. He simply says it doesn't win.

I've been thinking about inner peace and how it manifests in us. And lately, I've found myself drawn to the small patches of nature we pass every day without noticing. A stand of trees on the edge of a park. A row of pines next to a parking lot. A creek running under the road. Amid the clatter and clamor of everyday life, these ordinary places can bring us peace if we let them.

This week, try walking somewhere you can see even a small slice of nature. You'll probably still hear traffic or construction or whatever else the world is throwing at you. But look past all that and focus on what's in front of you. Let your eyes settle on the whole scene for a moment. Even an isolated cluster of trees has its own stillness, its own quiet dignity. There's peace there, even when the rest of life feels unraveled. Focus on it, breathe it in, and clear your mind.

Then, take a moment to zoom in. Instead of the whole tree, focus on a single branch. Notice its details – its strength, its stillness, its quiet presence. There's peace there too.

And then, zoom in even closer. One leaf. One pine needle. Think about the life that unfolds there over time – sun, rain, photosynthesis, insects finding food and shelter. From afar, it looks uninteresting. But looking closely, it's a world of its own. Notice the pine needle gently riding the breeze. And then realize... for a moment you've blocked out the city noise. You've found peace in a place you didn't expect.

John tells us that the light of Christ works the same way. It's cosmic and vast, yet close enough to wrap around you like your favorite sweater. Peace doesn't disappear when we can't feel it. Close your eyes and let the sound of traffic fade, replaced by the whisper of a leaf in the breeze. That's peace – there even when we think it's gone. It dwells in your mind, heart, and soul. Like God's light, peace is always there when we're open to it.

Prayer:

Gracious God, you who calms the storms and quiets our hearts, draw near to us when life feels unsettled. Open our eyes to the sacred places where your peace is already here: in the whisper of wind or in a single leaf. Help us to breathe deeply your presence and trust that your light always shines. May your peace find us right where we are. Amen.

I BELIEVE IN JOY, EVEN WHEN I DON'T FEEL IT



Clara Harmon | Elder, Community and Membership Committee

Advent Three | Luke 1:39-56

I believe in Joy...even when I don't feel it. As Pastor Audrey said in a recent sermon "we don't create joy, we make space for it. The spirit does the work, not us." I embrace joy in my life today. I can look for and celebrate the positive, as the two miraculously pregnant women, Mary and Elizabeth, did when they greeted one another.

The other day I made space for joy in an otherwise frightening situation. I embraced the feelings of playfulness and delight instead of fear and doubt when I found myself alone in an extraordinary traffic snarl in Manhattan. First, some details: John needed an outpatient procedure at a Manhattan hospital. A traffic standstill on the FDR meant that he ended up safely walking the last 5 minutes to reach the hospital on time. Now I was left alone to drive that same distance.

I could have panicked, let fear take over, let that familiar voice of self-doubt yell at me that I'll never get through this safely and without incident. I quieted those thoughts and made room for God's spirit. John was already inside. No time pressure. What a gorgeous day it was ...bright sunshine, dry pavement. How fortunate are we to live near such world-class healthcare facilities. As I proceeded snail-like through three intersections, the cars got even closer together and the honking louder. Don't block the box, don't sit in the crosswalk, don't hit anyone or anything. "You've got this," I kept saying. "You've got this."

When it was my time to take my life-changing left turn, I felt ready, even confident. I waited through several light cycles before boldly making the turn, getting stuck again on another crosswalk with my car not fully through the intersection. The car safety beepers chirped loudly... people, wheelchairs, passing too close in front, behind.

But I was smiling once I made that last turn ---"I did it! I did it!" I squealed to no one. I felt like I had earned an Olympic gold medal. In that moment I wished someone had been in the car with me for those 45 minutes to witness my victory. But as I write this I realize I was never alone. God's spirit was right there with me the whole time. Celebrating my courage, holding me safely in God's care. I made space for JOY!

Prayer (based upon the writings of Father Richard Rohr):

Gracious God, help us to remember that Joy is both a decision and a surrender. Grant us the courage to open our eyes and hearts to what is good, what is beautiful, what stirs our soul—and to let ourselves be delighted by it. Guide us to gently surrender to life's unpredictability, understanding that while we can't control much, we can choose how we respond. With your help we can choose to see joy, to welcome it, to live from it. Amen.



I BELIEVE IN LOVE, EVEN WHEN I DON'T FEEL IT

Bruce Smith | Elder, Finance Committee

Advent Four | Matthew 1:18-25

Like for many, the pandemic years were difficult for me. During that time both my parents became ill and eventually passed. Additionally, my youngest daughter was diagnosed with cancer. And the small business I had built over 30 years suffered a downturn that forced me to downsize and let go of several employees. While my family and friends were supportive, I can't say I was feeling the love from above. I prayed often but only heard crickets.

Similarly, I'm sure Joseph wasn't feeling the love from above just before the first Christmas. When he discovered that Mary was expecting a child—and that he wasn't the father—his world must have fallen apart. The dreams he had built for their life together were shattered; so much so that he “planned to dismiss her quietly.” Yet in that confusion, God sent an angel to him with a message: “Do not be afraid.” What looked like betrayal was actually the beginning of redemption for the entire world.

It would have been easy for Joseph to have rejected the angel's word. But Joseph chose to trust in God rather than his feelings. He chose to stay, to believe, and to love Mary. That was faith in its purest form.

Looking back on my own dark years, love was there for me even though I couldn't see it. It came through in my wife's steady belief when mine wavered; in the care of friends who reached out with encouragement; and in the peace I finally realized that helped me accept what I could not change. Love was present, just not in the way I expected.

So when love feels far away, we can remember Joseph. God's greatest work often begins in our most uncertain moments. Love is not gone when we can't feel it. It's simply waiting to be revealed.

Prayer:

Loving God, when life leaves us weary, remind us that your love always holds us together and never drifts away. Teach us, like Joseph, to trust your quiet work unfolding beneath our fear. Strengthen us to recognize love's presence in the care of others and moments of courage. Hold us close especially when we feel alone and reveal your amazing love in only the way you can. Amen.

I BELIEVE IN **THE SON**, EVEN WHEN I DON'T FEEL HIM



Sara Tirpak | Elder, Children, Youth, and Family Ministries Committee

Christmas Day | Luke 2:1-20

"So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea to Bethlehem, the town of David because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her first born, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them."

Wow. As I read this passage and reflect on the idea of belief and feeling being both intertwined and also falling apart, I think of how Mary and Joseph must not have been able to rely on their feelings as they were traveling away from their home for a census...while she was pregnant... before they were married...with nowhere to stay... and ultimately giving birth in a stable. I can only imagine that there were many instances where they ultimately had to choose to believe God's plan for them and this baby, not because of their feelings in the moment but because they chose to believe.

And then contrast that with the shepherds' experience: "An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." Followed by angels appearing, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." I can only imagine that for the shepherds, they were driven to go find baby Jesus because of their feelings and their beliefs being intertwined in that moment from the powerful and emotional presence of a heavenly host of angels praising God.

As I think through, wrestle with, and grow in my faith, I am reminded that I will have times where I might feel like Mary and Joseph, who were put in difficult circumstances where God's plan asked them not to rely on their feelings or circumstances but to chose to believe and act - and I will have times where I might feel like the shepherds, who clearly saw God's message through the presence of the heavenly host. As a result, their feelings intertwined with their beliefs and drove them to action. I pray that we as a church will continue to wrestle with this tension of faith and doubt - and to remember that at the birth of Jesus, God made himself equally real to both Mary and Joseph as well as the shepherds - but in very different ways.

Prayer:

Holy God, you met Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds in such different ways. Meet us in the ways we need you today. When our faith feels fragile, give us the courage to believe. Remind us that your Son is with us. Draw our hearts toward you and deepen our faith this Advent season. Amen.



BELIEVE THIS: THE TIME HAS COME

George Kolcun | Elder, Adult Ministries Committee

Sunday After Christmas | Luke 2:25-33

Simeon, let's take a moment to think about this. A promise was made to Simeon by the Holy Spirit – you will not pass away before you witness the coming of the Savior. The promise was kept. The promise was honored. The time has come. The long awaited messiah has arrived.

The time has come! Now that is a phrase we all are familiar with. How many times do you recall that situation when you experienced that phrase— “time to step up to the plate”, “time to pay that bill”, “time to put on your big boy britches.”

It's Christmas time. The time is come. Think about what may be as important as recognizing that the time is come—may be realizing how we react to it.

Simeon longed to live to see the day of the Savior's coming, but also to recognize the implication of the event. The birth of Jesus marks a new and everlasting covenant. A ministry marked by a new commandment – Love one another. Love first. Love unselfishly. Love unendingly.

Take time to step back from your everyday world and examine the true depth of what it means to be a Christian. To open your heart, your arms, your understanding of your fellow man. To reach out to those in need, maybe even to carry someone along the way. After all, it's Christmas time. A new beginning! And as it says in that material you probably got from Boys Town, “He ain't heavy Father, he's my brother.”

Prayer:

Faithful God, you keep all of your promises from generation to generation. As Simeon recognized your salvation in the face of a child, help us to recognize you in the holy moments you give to us. Open our hearts to love more fully, and to live boldly as followers of your Son Jesus. As this season invites us into new beginnings, fill us with gratitude and renewed purpose. Shape us into people of your light now and always. Amen.

BUILDING A STRONG FAITH

Alexandra Mead, Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries



Dear Families,

The children have been enjoying their music classes with Ms. Ortiz on Wednesdays and Sundays and learning to play handbells. They will be singing in worship every month!

Nothing will prepare your children for the big wide world more than building a strong faith base as they grow. A strong faith needs to be nurtured and reinforced at home. As our children grow, so does their understanding of the messages and stories in the bible.

On Sunday mornings, as the children gather in Sunday school at 8:45 am for their bible lesson, parents and grandparents have been meeting with me in the Howard House to read and discuss the same bible lesson to enable them to discuss the messages of Jesus with their children throughout the week, reinforcing those lessons. All are welcome to come and join us on this wonderful faith journey.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE | DEC 24 | 4:00 PM

We invite all children, grandchildren, cousins, friends, and neighbors to join in the celebration on Christmas Eve at 4:00 pm! Arrive by 3:45 pm to put on a costume and be part of our nativity scene. We have wise men, shepherds, sheep, donkeys, angels, cows, and of course Mary and Joseph. We have costumes for all ages and sizes - the more the merrier! No rehearsal necessary, no lines to memorize - just the joy of celebrating Jesus!

CHILI COOK-OFF AND SILENT AUCTION | FEB 27 | 6:30 PM

The Annual Chili Cook-Off and Silent Auction will be on Friday, February 27 at 6:30 pm at the Parish House. This yearly event not only provides the opportunity for chefs to showcase their best chili recipes, but helps raise funds for our youth mission trip taken each summer.

We need help collecting items to be a part of our silent auction. We had some fabulous gifts and treasures last year that helped us to reach our fundraising goal, so start thinking now! Please reach out to vendors you know or frequent, to ask for a donation. Donate a ride on your boat or a round of golf, guitar lessons, a flower arranging class, knitting workshop; anything you are able to donate will be greatly appreciated. If you'd like, send us your connection and we will do the asking. The greater the items we receive, the better our auction will be and the more fun we will have! Please contact Liz Annis at Elizabeth.Annis@gmail.com with any questions!



A SEASON OF GIVING

Caleigh Lawlor, Director of Youth Ministries

On Sundays, our youth group continues to put **love first**, channeling energy and teamwork into projects that make a meaningful difference in our community. This season has been especially full, as our students have worked hard to support both our unhoused neighbors and our college freshmen who are settling into life far from home.

Our youth have been gathering to meal-prepare dinners and desserts for twenty unhoused neighbors in our area. In total, the group prepares 80 meals, ensuring that neighbors receive not just nourishment, but a reminder that they are seen and valued.

Beyond meal prep, the youth have also been active in Jan's Closet, our free community clothing bank located at the Parish House. They've sorted donations, organized shelves, and created an inviting space where anyone can access clothing with dignity. Their work helps keep Jan's Closet running smoothly and ensures that families who visit feel welcomed and cared for.

And with the school year underway, our youth group has taken their support one step further by creating college care packages for our PCM freshmen. Filled with snacks (including Vern Verhoef's delicious homemade fudge!), notes, small comforts, and reminders of home, these packages are a way of sending love across the country. It's their way of saying, "We're still with you—you're part of us, no matter the distance."

Through meals, clothing, and care packages, our youth are embodying what it means to **love first**. Their efforts continue to bless our community, near and far, and we're incredibly proud of the compassion they're cultivating and sharing.



PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS

Jeanne Mueller, Director, Presbyterian Church Nursery School



How have we arrived at the season of Advent already? How quickly a year passes while caring for and teaching young children. We wanted to revisit the sentiments of Advent as we approach this beautiful season from a young child's perspective:

FAITH: Children always have faith – sometimes we adults should learn from the wisdom of young ones this time of year. Adults sometimes have a shaky sense of faith but just watch how a child grasps the concept of faith – whether it is learning through bible stories or having faith in the adults around them that they will be there to provide support always.

HOPE: Children are full of hope – every day but especially during the season of Advent. They hope for fun-filled days of wintry surprises (snow day!), toys at Christmas, family togetherness at Christmas Eve services, and gatherings at home.

LOVE: Children have the purest love – for all that surrounds them in their world. This is another lesson for adults – watch how children show love every day with all the people in their lives.

JOY: Children's joy is contagious at this time of year. Their excitement is palpable as they wait for Christmas day. The adults around them should "enJOY" the ride through this season of Advent and Christmas.

During Advent, Faith, Hope, Love, and Joy help us all prepare for Christmas – but we should watch the young children around us to show us the way to fully experience all of these sentiments. Enjoy the season with them – sing the beautiful songs and celebrate with lovely Church services. Celebrate the coming of Christ and let these sentiments enter your own heart during Advent.

The Presbyterian Church Nursery School and staff wishes the school and church families a joyous and peaceful Christmas Holiday.

- Jeanne Mueller and the PCNS Staff





JOIN THE LIVESTREAM TEAM!

PCM Livestream Team, Worship and Music Committee

What's it like to help the livestreaming team? It's probably easier than you think!

Each week, our team covers five main tasks – four of them on Sunday mornings – and we can always use more helping hands. No experience is needed; we provide full training!

We welcome volunteers who can share even small parts of this work from time to time. It's a rewarding way to support PCM's purpose: to create opportunities for people to experience Christ's love – by helping people worship where and when it's best for them.

If you'd like to help, please email info@pcmorristory.org or sign up at pcmorristory.org/livestreamteam

PREPARE THE OVERLAYS (FROM HOME FRI OR SAT)

Copy and paste information from the bulletin into our presentation app. This allows those worshipping from home to see who is speaking, what events are upcoming, or what hymn to sing.

CONTROL THE OVERLAYS (ON SUNDAY)

These are the on-screen titles that name speakers and music pieces, and display prayer text. From the livestream booth, you'll advance the slides so the overlays match what's happening in the sanctuary.

OPERATE THE VIDEO CAMERA (ON SUNDAY)

Using our professional equipment in the control booth, you'll switch between four cameras to follow the action on the chancel.

MANAGE THE SOUND (ON SUNDAY)

From the Yamaha sound mixer, adjust microphones and volume levels to keep the livestream – and sanctuary audio – clear and balanced.

ACT AS A CHAT HOST (FROM HOME)

Greet and interact with members worshipping online, helping them feel connected and included.



HONORING LOVED ONES WITH CHRISTMAS REMEMBRANCES



Lynne Harmen, Worship and Music Committee

This season brings joy, music, memory, and anticipation—and yet, for many of us, it also stirs tender places in the heart. We remember the people who shaped us, guided us, laughed with us, and loved us. We feel their absence more sharply amid the candles and carols. And still, we carry them with us.

Each Christmas, our congregation finds a meaningful way to honor our beloved ones. From mid-December through New Year's Day, the Chancel is transformed with poinsettias—bright, living symbols purchased through memorial donations given in the names of those we remember. As the sanctuary fills with color, it becomes a place where grief and gratitude meet, where the love we knew continues to shine. Whether your memories bring smiles, tears, or something in between, this tradition holds space for it all.

If you would like to honor a loved one with a memorial poinsettia this year, please complete the form at pcmorristown.org/christmas-remembrances by **December 15**. The suggested donation is \$25 per poinsettia, though all gifts—large or small—are deeply appreciated. Our online congregation is warmly invited to participate as well. No matter where you worship from, your remembrances are part of our shared Christmas story.

If you prefer to pay by check, please drop it in the Sunday offering plate or mail it to:

Presbyterian Church in Morristown
65 South Street
Morristown, NJ 07960

Please make checks payable to Presbyterian Church in Morristown, with "Christmas Remembrances 2025" in the memo.

As we move through this season, may we remember that love never ends. And may these poinsettias stand as bright reminders of the people who continue to inspire our faith.

THE LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE AND SUPPER | DEC 21 | 5:00 PM | THE CHAPEL

The holiday season can be a joyful time, but it can also bring feelings of loss, grief, or weariness. Our Longest Night Service, held near the winter solstice, offers a quiet, contemplative space for reflection and prayer. Together, we'll honor the complexities of this season, finding solace and support in community as we navigate life's challenges. This service is open to everyone and serves as a reminder that, even amid holiday celebrations, there is space to acknowledge and embrace all of our emotions. **Following the service, please stay and share a warm, home-cooked meal with us.**



LET'S KEEP SHOWING UP

Amanda Tufts, Director of Community Engagement

If you ever need proof that Christ's love can move — move people, move mountains, and yes, even move an entire roomful of Presbyterians into action — just spend a little time watching what PCM has been up to lately. I will give you a hint - it's incredible. Because somewhere between cooking dinners, organizing drives, and making sure kids are warm, PCM continues to live out our mission of **Love first**, and honestly, I'm here for it.

Let's start with the kitchen, where you have been chopping, sautéing, and stirring your hearts out. Each month, you cook for and serve dinner to 75 residents at Homeless Solutions, and every single week you prepare 80 meals for 20 individuals currently in the Morristown Housing Sprint. Week after week, month after month, you show up, you cook, you serve—and our unhoused neighbors receive not just a hot meal, but the reminder that someone cares enough to make it for them.

And then there's Jan's Closet, which has apparently grown legs and walked itself right into Morristown's Pre-K School: Lafayette Learning Center. The need was simple: children were coming to school without jackets, without shoes, without the basics. The solution? *"Well, guess we're making a satellite clothing bank."* Now, when a little one walks through the door shivering or in too-small sneakers, teachers can immediately grab exactly what they need. No waiting. No hoops. Just warmth. Just dignity. Just love.

But you didn't stop there. Nope. You said, "Can we make sure these students have food, too?" So during school breaks, when many children lose access to meals they depend on, you stepped right in. Winter break? Covered. Spring break? Covered. If a child needed food, you made sure they had it. No questions asked.

And then came the perfect storm: SNAP funds paused at the beginning of November, right when Teachers' Convention hit, which meant families suddenly had no school meals *and* no SNAP support right as break began. Chaos? For sure. Crisis? Absolutely. But here's what you did: you looked at the need, took a deep breath, and said, *"Alright, Jesus, we're on it."* Then, with the kind of teamwork that would make the disciples proud, you ensured every child at Lafayette Learning Center went home with a food gift card so they had what they needed through the long weekend. Every single child.

And friends... this is it. This is literally what Christ calls us to do.

Christ doesn't call us to wait for the perfect plan, the ideal timing, or the guarantee that we'll have enough volunteers. Christ calls us to **love first**. To show up. To take that first step, even when we're not sure what the second one will look like.

So, let's keep showing up.

OPERATION LOVE: NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 7



Marnie Kaller, Outreach Committee Member

For 40 years, the Presbyterian Church in Morristown and the Church of God in Christ in Morristown have partnered in this Christmas-time effort to bring “love, comfort, and joy” to those in our community who need both.

Please join in this wonderful, fulfilling outreach effort to help Morris County families and senior citizens celebrate Christmas with food and gifts. To make sure recipients get exactly what they need, we will be donating ShopRite, Walmart, and Five Below gift cards. We are also seeking volunteers to help wrap the cards and deliver them to their local recipients.

How to participate in Operation Love:

DONATE

- From Sunday, November 23 to Sunday, December 7, please drop off the following types of gift cards at the Parish House office (Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm) or bring to Sunday service:
 - Shoprite (\$25)
 - Walmart (\$15, \$20, \$25)
 - Five Below (\$15, \$20)
- Give online by visiting pcmorristoryn.org/operation-love
- Mail or drop off a check: Presbyterian Church in Morristown, 65 South Street, Morristown, NJ 07960 and note “Operation Love” on the memo line.

VOLUNTEER

- **Wrap Gifts** - Join other volunteers at the Church of God in Christ to wrap gift boxes Thursday and Friday, December 11 and 12, from 6:00 – 8:00 pm.
- **Deliver Gift Bags** - Help deliver gift bags on Saturday, December 13, from 8:45 am - 12:00 pm. Meet at the Church of God in Christ.
- **Sign up** to volunteer at pcmorristoryn.org/operation-love





MCCF CHRISTMAS BAGS: NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 7

Dick Kaller, Finance Committee Member

The Morris County Correctional Facility (MCCF) Christmas Gift Bag Program is a heartfelt outreach initiative supported by our church community. This year, we invite you to join us in donating essential items to create gift bags for approximately 430 individuals at the facility, helping to provide comfort and connection during the holiday season. By taking part in this program, we can embody the spirit of Christmas, sharing God's love and reminding those in our community that they are not forgotten.

How to participate in MCCF Christmas Bag Program:

DONATE

- Drop off donation items to the marked bins at the Parish House or the Church on the Green by December 7.
- You can also shop our Amazon Wish List found at [pcmorristown.org/mccf](https://www.pcmorristown.org/mccf)
- We ask that you donate only the following approved items, which have been cleared for security:
 - Men's white crew neck t-shirts in M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL (no v-neck or pocket)
 - Men's white briefs in M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL
 - Men's white sports socks in Avg, or L (may have gray under sock line)
 - Women's white sports bras in All Sizes (no underwire)
 - Women's white sports socks in All Sizes (may have gray under sock line)
 - Toiletries:
 - Toothpaste – Medium and large tubes
 - Soap – Individually wrapped bars, scent-free or neutral, avoid floral
 - Deodorant – Roll-on, no pumps or sticks, scent free, neutral, avoid floral
 - Body Lotion – No pumps, scent free or neutral, avoid floral scents

VOLUNTEER

- **Gift Bag Assembly** - Join us on Monday, December 8, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at Calvary Baptist Church in Morristown to assemble gift bags.
- **Sign up** to volunteer at [pcmorristown.org/mccf](https://www.pcmorristown.org/mccf)

A NEW WAY TO SERVE, TOGETHER



Lori Wilson, Outreach Committee Member

Members of our PCM community have such a great time volunteering together at Nourish.NJ's Dover facility that we'd love to make it a regular quarterly gig! Nourish.NJ loves this idea too!

Did you know that, for over 40 years, Nourish.NJ has never missed a single day of providing food, housing, work readiness, medical, social and educational services in a warm, safe and caring environment, free of charge, no questions asked? Did you also know that PCM members have been active supporters of this rich history for over 20 years?

Mark your 2026 calendars for the **first Tuesday of each quarter from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm** and join us for these hands-on opportunities to support Nourish.NJ as it addresses food insecurity in Morris County:

- Tuesday, January 6, 2026 | 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
- Tuesday, April 7, 2026 | 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
- Tuesday, July 7, 2026 | 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
- Tuesday, October 6, 2026 | 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

When we volunteer together at Nourish.NJ, we think you'll agree that:

- It's a fun and impactful way to get better acquainted with other PCM community members while serving vulnerable neighbors and supporting a great nonprofit.
- Nourish.NJ's Dover facility is a beautiful, well-maintained, accessible, and welcoming place.
- Baseball caps are only slightly more flattering than the alternative required head covering - hairnets!

To sign up to volunteer, please visit pcmorristown.org/nourish



INTRODUCING



THE FORUM ON THE GREEN: CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER

John Harmon, Management and Administration Committee Member

Beginning in 2026, the Presbyterian Church in Morristown is launching a new community-wide series designed to bring people together around topics that deeply impact our shared lives. Each year, **The Forum on the Green: Conversations That Matter** will explore one meaningful theme, inviting experts, storytellers, and neighbors to join us in honest conversation. Our inaugural series is titled “**Belonging in the Age of Loneliness**,” a topic that resonates across generations, backgrounds, and life experiences. These conversations are open to everyone, whether you are part of PCM, visiting for the first time, or simply seeking connection. We hope you’ll join us as we learn, listen, and grow together.

Belonging in the Age of Loneliness

Many of us experience loneliness or social isolation at some point in our lives. Moves, job changes, health challenges, divorce, loss, or distance from loved ones can quietly chip away at our sense of connection. For others, the constant pull of digital devices—social media, gaming, endless entertainment—creates the illusion of connection while keeping us at arm’s length from meaningful relationships. Over time, these experiences can subtly erode our wellbeing and widen the gap between the connection we desire and the connection we actually feel.

The Presbyterian Church in Morristown hopes to explore this growing reality by inviting speakers with lived experience, insight, and expertise to help us better understand the roots of this loneliness: its causes, its impact, and the ways we can begin to address it both individually and as a community. Throughout the season, we will host three conversations, each approaching the topic from a different angle.

On **January 8**, we welcome Kevin Hines, who survived a suicide attempt from the Golden Gate Bridge at age nineteen. Kevin will share his story: what led him to that moment, how he found healing and purpose, and how his journey can offer hope and guidance to others facing similar struggles.

In the spring, we will host a panel of Morristown public school educators to discuss the powerful influence of digital devices and online platforms on children and teens. They will address how social media, gaming, and digital entertainment shape behavior, learning, and long-term well-being and what tools and awareness can help families navigate this landscape with care. More details on this panel and our third event will be available in early 2026.

Together, these events invite our community to look honestly at loneliness, to understand it more deeply, and to discover ways we can foster real belonging within ourselves, within our families, and within our wider community. PCM intends to offer similar programs in coming years on topics of community interest and welcomes suggestions we can pursue.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Let's get to know each other.

Whether you've been part of our PCM family for years, are visiting for the very first time, or simply curious about getting to know us better, we would love for you to join any of our community events. Everything we plan—every gathering, meal, service opportunity, and celebration—is designed with one purpose in mind: **to create opportunities for people to experience Christ's love**. No membership required. No insider knowledge needed. Just come as you are—we can't wait to get to know you.



CHRISTMAS BRUNCH AND SANTA COLLECTION PROGRAM DECEMBER 7 | 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM | PARISH HOUSE (PH)

This special event, sponsored by Presbyterian Women, is open to all church members and friends – individuals, families, and children! Come enjoy a delicious brunch, warm fellowship, and the spirit of the season as we gather to reflect on the blessings of Christmas. Our very own Sue Woodruff will be showing and telling about her Santa collection. Whether you're a long-time member or new to our church family, this is a wonderful opportunity to connect and celebrate together. RSVP at pcmorristown.org/pw-brunch



ALL-CHURCH DINNER | DEC 10, JAN 14 | 6:00 PM | PH

Join us on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:00 pm for our All Church Dinner at the Parish House and enjoy a fun activity for the children while the PCM family spends time together before the holidays. We hope you can be a part of these very special evenings! RSVP at pcmorristown.org/dinner



CAROLS AND COCOA | DECEMBER 14 | 4:00 PM | PH

Get ready to ring in the holiday season at our annual "Carols and Cocoa" sing-along. It's the most wonderful time of the year, and we're bringing the joy of the holiday right to South Street! Grab a mug of hot cocoa and a festive red scarf - then gather 'round the bonfire to sing your heart out to your favorite Christmas carols and holiday tunes. Whether you're a professional singer or just love to hum along, our sing-along is open to everyone!



POTLUCK PRESBYTERIANS SPRING SEASON BEGINS SOON!

The QUINTESSENTIAL small group dining experience! The current Potluck Presbyterians season will end in January. Sign up for the spring season (March, April, and May) will begin in late January. Please watch for the registration form. We hope YOU will join us!

PW CHRISTMAS BRUNCH: A BRIEF HISTORY AND MAGICAL COLLECTION OF SANTAS

Sponsored by Presbyterian Women

Celebrate the joy of the Christmas season with us at our annual PW Christmas Brunch! This special event, sponsored by Presbyterian Women, is open to all church members and friends – individuals, families, and children!

Come enjoy a delicious brunch, warm fellowship, and the spirit of the season as we gather to reflect on the blessings of Christmas. Our very own Sue Woodruff will be sharing her collection of 19th and 20th century Santas.

Whether you're a long-time member or new to our church family, this is a wonderful opportunity to connect and celebrate together.

We look forward to sharing this festive time with you. Bring a friend, bring your Christmas cheer, and join us for this memorable event!

Date: Sunday, December 7

Time: 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Location: Parish House

Cost:

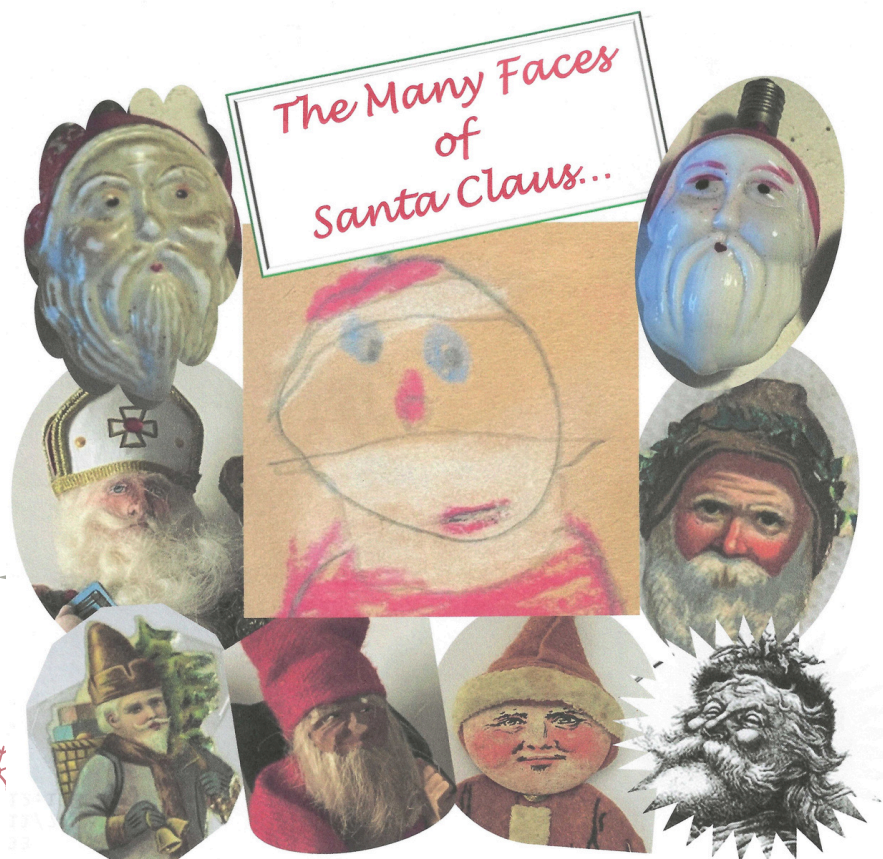
\$10 – Adult

\$5 – Child

\$25 – Family

RSVP at

pcmorristown.org/pw-brunch



OUR CHURCH: REMEMBERING & PRESERVING THE PAST & PRESENT FOR THE FUTURE



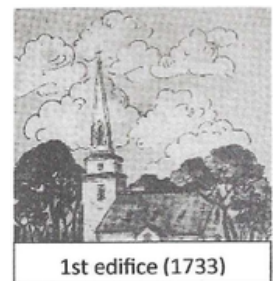
Sue Woodruff, PCM Heritage Room Member

We often hear the words of famous Spanish philosopher George Santayana "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Perhaps a more positive spin on that thought was penned by American historian and author Carter G. Woodson, who emphasized that "Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history."

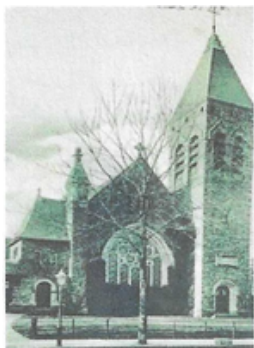
Here at The Presbyterian Church in Morristown, select records were sent to the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia in the late 1960s. In the 1990s, AAA built a Heritage Room in the Parish House basement as a repository for the historical documents and artifacts we retained while others were secured in church safes or scattered among the church facilities. Jan Frazier and the late Barbara King were making strides on consolidating the records when it was determined that the room would be needed to install an elevator during the last major Parish House renovation.

Thus, a new Heritage Room was established in Parish House attic space. With thanks to a church member, "like new" filing cabinets were acquired and a \$5,000 grant for archival storage and miscellaneous equipment was awarded by the Morris County Historical Commission.

Barbara and Jan kept up the slow and tedious - often daunting - process of organizing and indexing all the books, papers, photos, miscellaneous ephemera, and artifacts. During the aforementioned renovation and that of the Church on the Green, individuals continued to (and still do) donate items from their personal and family collections.



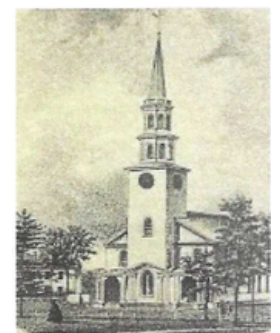
1st edifice (1733)



South Street Church
(1878) aka The Parish
House (1927)

Recently added to the mix of our history are contents of the large safe located in the Church on the Green. A sampling of what is in the safe and in the Heritage Room include the Bible belonging to our first Pastor, Timothy Johnes; sermons by subsequent pastors; records of births, marriages, attendance, and deaths (many of which are available at the library and on line in the book "The Record"); newspaper clippings regarding major church anniversaries, and more.

Earlier this year Sue Woodruff joined the team which continues to work diligently labeling and organizing the assorted items so that the Heritage Room can become a place to research the rich history of our church from its founding in 1733.

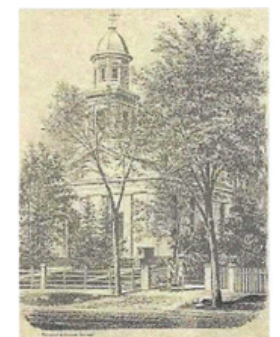


2nd edifice (1795)



The Chapel (1869), the 3rd edifice (1893)
& the manse (1885) aka Howard House

We are grateful for the significant assistance of Jim Allison, Bruce Frazier, and AAA toward this ongoing project. The Finance Committee is also involved as it is important to document and itemize our historical assets. As decisions on how to proceed with the safest way to archive valuable information from our past, both in that impressive safe and in the Heritage Room, we will keep you informed.



South Street Church
(1841)



FALL HAS BEEN SO MUCH FUN!

An Update from the Community and Membership Committee



Our monthly **All Church Dinners** bring families and friends of all ages together throughout the year. In September, we gathered for burgers and hotdogs to kick off the program year. In October, the children delighted in Halloween spider cupcakes after a dinner of pasta and roasted veggies. Diners brought their favorite Thanksgiving side dishes to share at our November Thanksgiving feast, while we packed bags Winter Break Care Kits for our young friends at Lafayette Learning Center!



More than 80 children and their families attended the **Halloween Movie Night** in the Church on the Green courtyard on Friday October 24. Kids and adults alike enjoyed freshly popped popcorn and apple cider (hot AND cold!) while watching two holiday movie shorts under the stars.



Halloween Trunk or Treat, in association with the Morristown Partnership, found several costumed church volunteer characters gathered at the Parish House parking lot handing out candy to several hundred little ghosts and goblins. Smiling farmer Vern and his friends greeted the delighted children from a decorated car near the South Street sidewalk.



2026 WILL BE HERE SOON!

What are you most excited for?

JAN 4

EPIPHANY SUNDAY

8:00 AM CHAPEL | 10:00 AM SANCTUARY AND ONLINE

We gather beneath the light of God's guiding star to open our hearts to the year ahead. As part of our worship, each of us will receive a Star Word—a single, spirit-gifted word to accompany, challenge, and inspire us through 2026. Just as the Magi followed the star toward hope and revelation, we too will listen for how God might speak through these simple but powerful words.

JAN 8

FORUM ON THE GREEN: KEVIN HINES

6:00 PM | CHURCH ON THE GREEN

We begin the 2026 **Belonging in the Age of Loneliness** series with Kevin Hines, a mental health advocate whose story has inspired people around the world. After surviving a suicide attempt from the Golden Gate Bridge at age nineteen, Kevin has dedicated his life to sharing how hope, connection, and timely support can change a life's trajectory. His honest reflections on the challenges that led him to that moment—and the community and care that sustained his healing—offer a powerful invitation to understand loneliness more deeply and to become sources of belonging for one another.

JAN 19

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY WORSHIP SERVICE

12:00 PM | CHURCH ON THE GREEN

Join us as we gather in our sanctuary for a special MLK Day worship service, hosted in partnership with the Martin Luther King Observance Committee. Together, we will honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through prayer, music, and reflection that calls us to justice, unity, and hope. All are welcome as we celebrate his vision and recommit ourselves to his work.

JAN 26 -

JAN 29

SACRED SPACE: A CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER WALK

4:00 - 8:00 PM | CHURCH ON THE GREEN

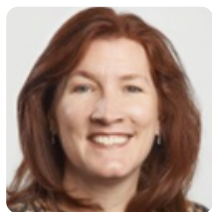
We're excited to once again offer this unique, interactive prayer walk that has become a beloved tradition in our community. Designed as a guided spiritual journey, Sacred Space invites you to move through a contemporary labyrinth at your own pace, listening to recorded reflections and music as you pause at stations along the way. It's an experience that is both communal and deeply personal—an hour set apart to encounter God's presence, reflect, and breathe.

FEB 1

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

11:00 AM | THE SANCTUARY AND ONLINE

We invite all members to join us for our Annual Congregational Meeting, a time to reflect on the past year, celebrate the ministry we share, and look ahead with hope and purpose.



AN UPDATE FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Betty Darcy, Finance Committee Chair

Our most recent Treasurer's Report yielded good news!

Revenues

Pledges YTD October continued to exceed budget by about \$25,000, due to several large pledge payments at the start of the year. Additionally, the Per Capita revenue continues to exceed budget due to the great response to the mailer sent out in early Fall.

Expenses

Operating expenses continue to be under budget. The reduced expenditures for the Worship and Music Programs have aided in offsetting some overages from Management & Administration, Maintenance and Supplies for Buildings & Grounds.

Results

October year to date, the church is about \$85,000 favorable to budget on a net basis.

Major Maintenance

YTD expenditures of \$170,514 have been for Manse renovations, paving the COG parking lot, tree work and boiler repair which is lower than budgeted of \$346,000.

Endowment Activity

October YTD Endowment withdrawals (all budgeted) total \$448,978 for operating expenses. Our endowment funds grew from \$8,411,641 as of 1/1/2025 to \$9,286,100 as of 10/31/2025. Our withdrawals from the Endowment, while budgeted, are projected to be just over 9% of the Endowment 2025 beginning balance. This assumes only half the Major Maintenance budgeted withdrawal. We received bequests of \$550,000 and investment returns of 10.8%. The Endowment is imperative in supporting PCM's operation and maintenance of our buildings.

We hope you agree that God is at work through our congregation and will continue to bless The Presbyterian Church in Morristown.

** Reporting as of 10/31/2025*

AN UPDATE FROM THE VISION TEAM

Thank you for all of your encouragement and support!

The PCM Vision Team's task was to develop a vision statement unique to PCM, one that truly reflects the voices, hopes, and diversity of our congregation. This included gathering feedback, engaging in prayerful discernment, and listening attentively for God's direction for our church. We aimed for a statement that would be compelling—something that carried weight and purpose; unifying—something that resonated across the breadth of our community; and declarative—something that would meaningfully shape decisions in the years ahead.

Our Mission (as followers of Jesus): *Love first.*

Our Purpose (as a church): *To create opportunities for people to experience Christ's love.*

Our Vision (for God's world): *That all may be one with God and one another.*

These statements articulate not only who we are as a church family but who we are striving to become. **"Love first"** continues to shape our conversations as we discern how this mission takes root in the daily life of PCM. The values that rise to the surface—**compassion, humility, service, connection, and inclusivity**—reflect the heart of our community and the direction in which we believe God is leading us. In many ways, these commitments are already evident in our ministries and relationships; in other ways, they challenge us to grow even more fully into the calling before us. As we move forward into the third phase of this process, the Vision Team is grateful for the congregation's prayers, insights, and trust throughout this process.

We look forward to continuing this journey together as we seek, with God's help, to "Love first" in all we do.

LOVE FIRST

Bill Crean

Brrring sounds the alarm
Rub my blurry eyes.

Love First.

Daily news read by Alexa
Already a list of alerts on my phone
Emojis expressing all emotions.

Love First.

Skipped breakfast - just coffee
Cut off by a Jeep in traffic
Paused at a red light to take a deep breath.

Love First.

Emails, meetings, errands, chores
Conflicts, agreements, passive/aggressive
A ribbon tied around my finger reminds me.

Love First.

Unhoused, unfed, undocumented
Unaccounted for, unseen, unheard, unwelcome.

Love First.

Argument, debate, disagreement
Politics, money, power, science.

Love First.

Nightcap, end of day reflections
The good, the bad, and the ugly.

Love First.

What does tomorrow bring?
I don't know in entirety
But I know how I will get it started.

Love First.

LET'S STAY CONNECTED

Please contact the office to update your contact information.

We worship weekly in-person at 8:00 am (Chapel) or 10:00 am (Sanctuary)
Our weekly 10:00 am service is livestreamed and available for replay at: **pcmorrictown.org**

The **Parish House** is located at 65 South Street
The **Sanctuary, Chapel, and Howard House** are located at 57 E. Park Place

Please feel free to contact our offices at the Parish House at **973-538-1776**

PCM STAFF

Rev. Daniel Vigilante | Pastor

Rev. Audrey Webber | Associate Pastor

Alexandra Mead | Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries

Dr. Ben Riggs | Interim Director of Adult Music

Madelyn Ortiz | Interim Director of Children's Music

Kevin Graf | Organist

Caleigh Lawlor | Director of Youth Ministries

Paul Koski | Director of Administration

Amanda Tufts | Director of Community Engagement

Jeanne Mueller | Director of Presbyterian Church Nursery School

Kay Smith | Administrative Assistant

Kevin McAllister | Finance Administrator

Kristo Pango | Sexton

Sigris Lorena Girón Sorto | Weeknight Custodian

Cory VillNeuve | Weekend Custodian

Carly Tufts | Childcare Coordinator

FIND US ONLINE [PCMORRISTOWN.ORG](https://www.pcmorrictown.org)



LOVE FIRST.