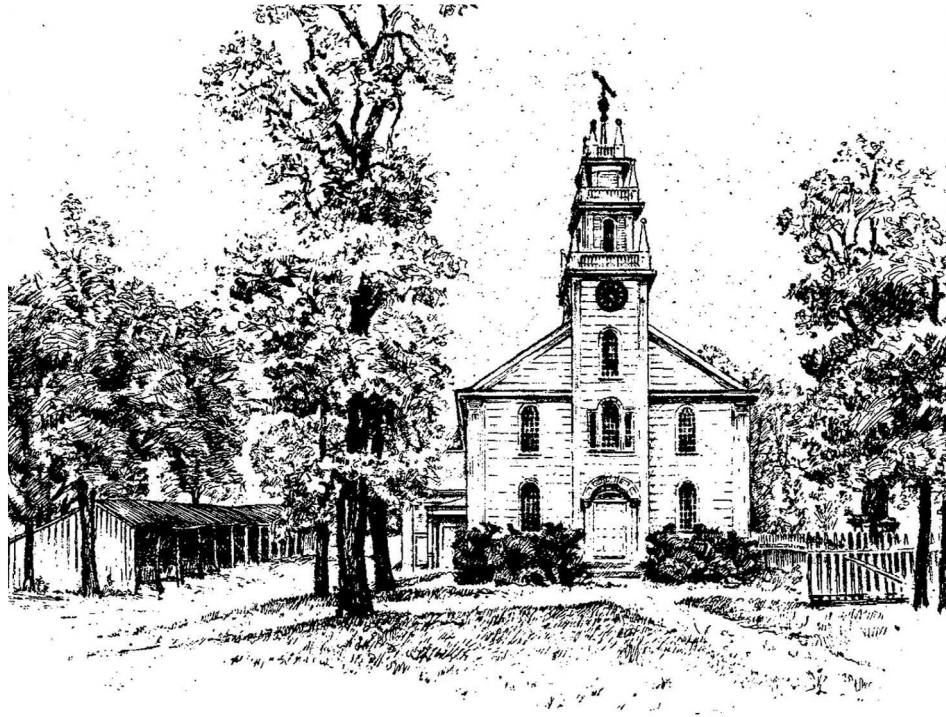


**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**TIDINGS**  
**DECEMBER 2011**



**The Rev. James W. Hulsey**  
**Pastor**

**Ms. Janice Moore-Caputo**  
**Assistant to the Pastor**

**The Rev. William H. Edwards III**  
**Pastor Emeritus**

**Dr. Pablo Lavandera, Organist, Director of Music**

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Dear Friends,

I am back from sabbatical and ready to reconnect. This time was more than any one thing I could say about it. I find myself using words like amazing, extraordinary, once-in-a-lifetime, wonderful. Rather easily, I can give a travelogue of what I did and show a few pictures. That is the 'what' of this experience as a friend used to say.

But he went on to add the 'so what.' The 'so what' is that aspect of life that either changes us or not. I am still feeling and reflecting on the 'so what.' That part of this sabbatical journey cannot be produced so easily.

As we approach Christmas this Advent, there is a 'what' and a 'so what.' As T. S. Eliot's magi say, "there was a birth, no doubt." There are lights on trees. There are parties and foods. There are concerts and services. There are family gatherings and presents or, perhaps, none. All that we can document. We can plan it or fret about it.

The magi also said, "but this birth was like death, our death." If anyone knows T. S. Eliot's writings, he can hardly mention death without hinting birth. It's not that he wants to skirt the difficult. His magi say that "this death was hard and bitter agony for us." When we come to an ending, any ending of significance, it can be hard.

Yet, we do not see something new without the passing of old sight. Within the encounter with the extraordinary and wonderful, there is a limit one passes.

I am still reflecting on the 'so what' of my sabbatical journey. It took me many places. Some were new places of the mind and the heart. If I look and feel more relaxed, more invigorated, it's because I've been to those places.

It will take a while to bring those places to words, to bring them home because they are still actively giving birth. Please, excuse these ruminations if they seem like nonsense to you.

Spiritual journeys are never quite to the point because they do not move directly from one point to the next. They take us by different routes that alter our routines.

We can travel to Christmas only by a checklist of what we have to do and must get done, or we can risk a journey. In this culture, if we meet at the mall, we'll probably be on the 'what' side of Christmas. If, on the other hand, we meet at Preparing the Presence, Second Saturday Worship, Caroling on Saturday afternoon or around the communion table on Christmas Eve, we'll probably be exploring the 'so what' of this life together.

That is the incredible journey God has taken and calls us to share. Let's meet on that journey and share the stories that will heal our wounds and nurse them to life.

*Merry Christmas, Jimmy*

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**WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER 2011**

- SUNDAY, DEC. 4<sup>th</sup>**                      *Worship with Communion at 9 & 11 a.m.  
Preparing the Presence, 2 to 4 p.m. in the Parish Hall*
- SATURDAY, DEC. 10<sup>th</sup>**              *Worship with Communion at 5 p.m. in the Parish Hall*
- SUNDAY, DEC. 11<sup>th</sup>**                      *Church School Worship Program at 9 a.m.  
Worship at 11 a.m.*
- SUNDAY, DEC. 18<sup>th</sup>**                      *Worship at 9 & 11 a.m. with special Choir music  
Angel Gifts returned*
- SATURDAY, DEC. 24<sup>th</sup>**                      *Family Worship Service at 5 p.m.  
Worship with Communion and candle lighting  
at 9 & 11 p.m.*
- SUNDAY, DEC. 25<sup>th</sup>**                      *Christmas Day worship at 10 a.m.*
- SUNDAY, JAN. 1<sup>st</sup>**                          *New Year's Day worship with communion at 10 a.m.*

**SAVE THIS IMPORTANT DATE!!!** *Preparing The Presence*, our annual Advent Worship service including workshops for all ages, is scheduled for Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, from 2 to 4 p.m. We encourage everyone to attend this meaningful afternoon to help make Christmas a little brighter for others.

**COAT DRIVE** – As part of *Preparing The Presence*, our Youth Group will be collecting gently-used coats to be donated along with the Adopt-An-Angel gifts. Please bring your coat donation to *Preparing The Presence* on December 4<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m.

**ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING CEREMONIES** - Families, committees and other groups of all kinds are invited to participate in the wreath lighting ceremonies at all worship services during the Advent season. Volunteers may sign up at the Deacon Bulletin Board and pick up the program readings at the church office.

**CALL for VOLUNTEERS** - Celebrate this Advent Season by volunteering to serve as a Pulpit Assistant, Communion Server or Usher. Sign up sheets are in the hallway outside the Narthex.

**FLOWER GUILD POINSETTIAS** are being offered for sale beginning Sunday, December 4<sup>h</sup>, for \$12 each. The plants will be used to decorate the church and may be taken home by the donor at the conclusion of the 11 p.m. service on Christmas Eve. There is a sign-up sheet for your order and dedication on the bulletin board outside the Narthex. Please make all checks payable to "Flower Guild". **All requests must be received by noon, Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>.**

**JOIN US AS WE GO A-CAROLING** to the home bound on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>. We will gather in the Parish Hall at 2 p.m. and head out to spread Christmas joy.

**THE GREETINGS TREE** – Instead of sending Christmas cards to our church friends this year, please consider giving a contribution to Presbyterian Women's "Greeting Tree". The money collected will be donated to the Protestant Campus Ministries at SUNY-Stony Brook. PW members will be available to take your donations in the Narthex through Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>.

**NEWS FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN**

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1<sup>st</sup>**      **PWCT Christmas Party in the Parish Hall at 6:30**

**PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S COLLECTION OF HEALTH KIT items** for Church World Services is beginning. **Health kits include** one hand towel, one large comb, one bath-size bar of soap, one 4-7 oz. tube of toothpaste, one wash cloth, one metal nail file, one toothbrush, six Band-aids. Any of these items may be placed in the bags in the lobby. The kits are assembled by PW and then shipped to disaster areas here and abroad and to Third-World countries. Our congregation has been very generous with donations in the past. Please keep up the good work. Thank you for your help in an important mission project. Any questions? Please call Debbie Rosenberg at 382-7813.

**SEABURY BARN** is a short-term (30 days) residential facility for 12-17 year olds who have no place to live and are experiencing dysfunctional lives. Presbyterian Women collect many items during December for these youth to make their stay a bit easier. Again this year we will keep a box next to the Greetings Tree in the Narthex to place your donations. Please bring unwrapped items for youth – both boys and girls between ages 12 and 17. Requested items include toiletries, stationery with stamps and pen. G-rated DVDs, puzzles and games, white socks, combs and brushes etc. For a more detailed list of items of special need check the PW Bulletin board in the hallway. As you shop this holiday season, please remember these youth who are in difficult transition.

**A REMINDER FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY** – Please be aware that contributions received on the last Sunday of the year (December 25<sup>th</sup> this year) will be the last ones to be entered into the 2011 accounts. Therefore, all contributions received by the last Sunday will be included on your year 2011 contributions receipt for tax purposes. Your 2011 contribution receipt will be mailed to you in January. Any contributions received after will be acknowledged on your 2012 contribution receipt. Thank you.

**OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR THE YEAR 2012 ARE AVAILABLE IN THE NARTHEX THE SECOND SUNDAY OF DECEMBER** - Envelopes have been prepared for all who have requested them. *Please be sure to look for your envelopes and take them home with you* – this will save the cost of mailing. If envelopes were not prepared for you and you would like a box, please call Bette Adams in the Church Office (265-5151) or the Financial Secretary, Nancy Avitable (686-6203 or e-mail [jlavit@optonline.net](mailto:jlavit@optonline.net)). **Remember – please DO NOT use these envelopes until January 2012.** Note: Senior High students and graduates are welcome to request their own envelopes.

**FROM THE BOARD OF DEACONS**

The following who have signed up have recently celebrated their birthday or will soon be celebrating. Please add your name on the sign-up Birthday List outside the Narthex if it is not already on the list.

	<b><u>October</u></b>		<b><u>November</u></b>		<b><u>December</u></b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	Daniel Riley	1 <sup>st</sup>	Patricia Heins	1 <sup>st</sup>	Elsa Craig
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Jackie Buturla		Lori Kenney	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Caitlin Heath
	Diane Franzese	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Robert O'Brien		Jen Agostini
	Debbie Gambin	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Louis Riley, Jr.	5 <sup>th</sup>	Sophia Langella
	Maribeth Siskind	7 <sup>th</sup>	Kim Vollkommer		Russ Dalba
4 <sup>th</sup>	Lorraine Bird		Kate Zvokel	6 <sup>th</sup>	Linda Goodwin
	Taylor Morozowski	8 <sup>th</sup>	Andrew Jones		Martha Ryder
	Louis Perri	9 <sup>th</sup>	Gwen Johnston		Calvin Sanford
5 <sup>th</sup>	Peter Auer		Sue Nunziata	7 <sup>th</sup>	Louis Riley
	Emily Heath	11 <sup>th</sup>	Heather Kern	11 <sup>th</sup>	Ethel Kraft
6 <sup>th</sup>	Sandy Castaldi	14 <sup>th</sup>	Karen Schilling	15 <sup>th</sup>	Carol Miller
7 <sup>th</sup>	Kelly Vollkommer	15 <sup>th</sup>	Kimberly Ednie		Darryl Shiffler
10 <sup>th</sup>	Terry Miller		Tracey Femminella	21 <sup>st</sup>	Lois Netter
	Danny Pedersen		Alexis Heins	24 <sup>th</sup>	Kathryn Stovall
11 <sup>th</sup>	Pam Farino	16 <sup>th</sup>	Michael Drechsler	25 <sup>th</sup>	Lillian Munro
	Elena Faverio		Harriet McMahon	27 <sup>th</sup>	Richard Heath
12 <sup>th</sup>	Michele DiGiacomo		Nathaniel Rosengrant	27 <sup>th</sup>	Kimberly Pedersen
	Charles Bonczyk		Phyllis Oakes	28 <sup>th</sup>	Marie Brenner
14 <sup>th</sup>	Christian Fey	18 <sup>th</sup>	Shaun La Peter	31 <sup>st</sup>	Paul Agostini
15 <sup>th</sup>	Matt Lipinsky	19 <sup>th</sup>	Gloria Jones		Harold Carson
16 <sup>th</sup>	Elliot Yates	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Danielle Fey		
17 <sup>th</sup>	Patrick Falk	24 <sup>th</sup>	Terry Meaney		
	Janice Moore-Caputo	25 <sup>th</sup>	Tiffany Schneider		
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Tamara Siskind	30 <sup>th</sup>	Claudia Falk		
25 <sup>th</sup>	Karl Kraft				

**ADOPT-AN-ANGEL** – The Angel cards are ready and await adoption after the 9 and 11 a.m. services. As you will see, they are on the tables in the hallway grouped by age...some family's cards are tied together for those of you who wish to adopt siblings too. **PLEASE REMEMBER TO REGISTER YOUR ANGEL WITH THE PERSON SITTING AT THE TABLE WITH THE ANGEL NOTEBOOK.** We will also be adopting angels the next two Sundays, December 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. Angel Sunday is December 18<sup>th</sup> when we bring all gifts back to the church.

This program and mission of our church allows us to bring God's love to children in our community who have tough circumstances in their families or are without families. These gifts that we give to our adopted angels are the only gifts this child will receive this Christmas. Thank you for sharing what you have with others that have far less.

Watch for a more detailed description of the entire Adopt-An-Angel program in the next Sunday bulletins and in your e-mail. **If you have any questions, please call Sharon Castlen (979-5989).**