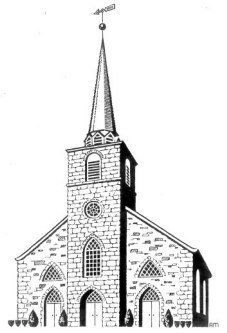


**Saddle River
Reformed Church
worshiping at
Old Stone Church
December 2023**



We invite you to join us in celebrating the seasons of Advent and Christmas 2023

Calendar

**Worship - Sundays at 10am
Old Stone Church**

The Sundays of Advent

12/3 - with Holy Communion,
12/10, 12/17, & 12/24 at 10am

Bible Study & Lunch Bunch
Wednesdays at 11am in the
Lounge

Nativity of the Lord

Christmas Eve Service

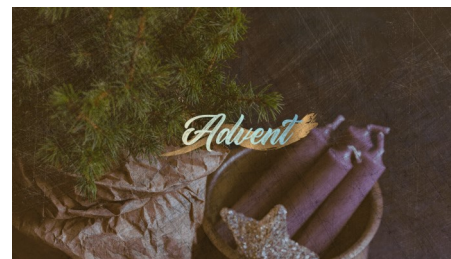
Sunday, December 24 at 5pm

Sew & Sew Group
Friday, December 1st at 12
noon in the Lounge

**First Sunday after Christmas
Day**

Sunday, December 31 at 10am

Consistory Meeting
Wednesday, December 13th at
6:15pm in the Lounge



Sew & Sew Group
Friday, December 15th

**Nativity of the Lord
Christmas Eve Service
at 5pm
Sunday, December 24**

If you are unable to be with us to worship in person, you can participate via Facebook Live on our page:

You do not need to be a member of Facebook to access this link.

<https://www.facebook.com/Old-StoneSaddle-River-Reformed-Church-105866604368793>

Find us on the web and on social media

oldstonechurchonline.org

Facebook: Old Stone/Saddle River Reformed Church

Instagram: oldstonechurchnj

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December 2023 Lectionary Year B

December 3 - Communion

Rev. Mel Van Hattem

First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64:1-9;
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19;
1 Corinthians 1:3-9;
Mark 13:24-37

December 10

**Naoki Inoue, RCA
Seminarian**

Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11;
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13;
2 Peter 3:8-15a;
Mark 1:1-8

December 17 **Rev. Leah Ennis-Gasero** **Third Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11;
Psalm 126;
Luke 1:46b-55;
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24;
John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24 **Led by the Consistory** **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16;
Luke 1:46b-55;
Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26;
Romans 16:25-27;
Luke 1:26-38

December 24 **Rev. Steve Sayer** **Christmas Eve: Nativity of the Lord**

Isaiah 9:2-7;
Psalm 96;
Titus 2:11-14;
Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

December 25 **Christmas Day**

Isaiah 62:6-12;
Psalm 97;
Titus 3:4-7;
Luke 2:(1-7), 8-20

December 31 **Rev. Mel Van Hattem** **First Sunday after Christmas Day**

Isaiah 61:10-62:3;
Psalm 148;
Galatians 4:4-7;
Luke 2:22-40

End of Year Giving & Pledging

Thank you to everyone who filled out pledge cards for the 2023 budget. It's not too late to submit your pledge for 2023 if you haven't done so. Please contact Cathy Lowden, Treasurer, with your 2023 pledge.

In this season of gift giving to family, friends and those less fortunate, we hope you will also consider your gift to the Saddle River Reformed Church. It is through the donations of every individual and family in the congregation that we are able to carry on our work.

In addition, in the course of year-end tax planning, you may find yourself considering special one-time donations. As you contemplate year-end gifts, please keep the Old Stone Church in mind.

We welcome your donations through the online giving page on the church website at <https://oldstonechurchonline.org/> and click on the Give button.

GIVE

Christmas Card

If you would like to send Christmas greetings to other members of our church family via the annual church Christmas card, please contact the church office either by email or through the mail by **December 11, 2023**. This is a great way to remember the church family and help the church at the same time.



Cemetery Grave Blankets

We are pleased to announce that once again we are offering families the option of ordering Christmas Grave Blankets directly through our office. You can reserve a grave blanket by emailing the church office and mailing payment of **\$44 before December 11, 2023**.

December Missions Offering

The Deacons will be collecting funds during December for the Center for Food Action New Jersey.

Together we can help thousands of NJ families

Center for Food Action is one of the largest emergency food relief agencies in New Jersey. With a mission to prevent hunger and homelessness, CFA improves the lives of low-income families and individuals from over 100 towns in northern NJ. CFA provides a wide range of emergency and case management services so that our neighbors in need can put food on their tables, keep a roof over their heads, keep their lights and gas on, and heat their homes. Their advocates help provide information, referrals, counseling, assistance in accessing public programs, and other community services needed to help improve their lives.



You can give to this ministry in person **during Sunday morning worship** (please make checks payable to Saddle River Reformed Church and designate as Mission of the Month) or **on-line using the church website and by selecting “Giving” from the menu or the “Give” button and choosing “Mission of the Month” in the dropdown list.** <https://oldstonechurchonline.org/>



Thank you!!!

The church office received an email from the Hawai'i Community Foundations thanking the church for the donation. They let us know the donation will be deployed efficiently with a focus on relief and recovery for communities affected by the devastating wildfires on Maui.

The church office also received an email from the Center for Food Action thanking the church for the generous gift of \$900 from the Cozy Soups for Fall fundraiser. The CFA notes that because of the gift, our neighbors will have healthy and nutritious food on their tables for their families.



The Jesse Tree—An Advent Tradition

What is Jesse Tree?

Jesse Tree is a way of preparing for Advent by journeying through the stories on Jesus's family tree. Each day of Advent, read a Bible story about someone on Jesus's family tree and hang an ornament symbolizing the story on your Jesse Tree. As you decorate your tree, you'll see how God prepared for Jesus to be born through many generations.

Where does Jesse Tree come from?

The Jesse Tree tradition is rooted in Isaiah 11:1: "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." Jesse was the father of David, Israel's greatest king. And Jesus is descended from the line of David. He is the branch God promised would grow from Jesse's family tree. Each symbol represents a story from within this family tree and a step toward the birth of Jesus.

For more information go to:
<https://www.faithward.org/jesse-tree/>



Advent Candle Lighting Readings

These Advent candle lighting readings can be used at home with your family. The Advent wreath's circular shape symbolizes God's constant and unchanging nature. On Christmas Eve or Christmas day, the full wreath of Advent candles is lit to symbolize that Christ, the light of the world, has arrived.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

On this first Sunday in Advent, let this light shine brightly as the days grow shorter, so that we will be ready for your face to shine upon us at Christmas. In the Savior's name we pray. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

We have much to do and we are not sure we will be ready for the day of your coming. In Advent's light, help us to see what is important: to be who you want us to be, and to do what you would have us do. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

We carry many burdens and worry over many things. Help us to hear your promise in this Advent season, that in hearing, we may receive the Spirit's gift of joy. And may our spirits be kept sound at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Your faithfulness has been great, leading us to this day of anticipation and celebration. May the glorious light of your steadfast love shine brightly in us and through us, that all may give you praise and glory. In the Savior's name we pray. Amen.



REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

EACH DAY ADD AN ITEM TO A BOX.
ON CHRISTMAS EVE DONATE THE CONTENTS TO A
FOOD BANK.

- December 1 - box of cereal
- December 2 - peanut butter
- December 3 - stuffing mix
- December 4 - boxed potatoes
- December 5 - macaroni and cheese
- December 6 - canned fruit
- December 7 - canned tomatoes
- December 8 - canned tuna
- December 9 - dessert mix
- December 10 - jar of applesauce
- December 11 - canned sweet potatoes
- December 12 - cranberry sauce
- December 13 - canned beans
- December 14 - box of crackers
- December 15 - package of rice
- December 16 - package of oatmeal
- December 17 - package pasta
- December 18 - spaghetti sauce
- December 19 - chicken noodle soup
- December 20 - tomato soup
- December 21 - can corn
- December 22 - can mixed vegetables
- December 23 - can carrots
- December 24 - can green beans

PASSIONATEPENNYPINCHER.COM

St. Nicholas Day - December 6

St. Nicholas, or Sinterklaas, as he was known to the Dutch settlers who brought him to America is a real and ancient saint of the Christian church whose feast day is December 6. The man who became St. Nicholas was born some time in the middle of the fourth century in what is now Turkey, and little is known about him. He was an abbot known for his piety and benevolence, and he became archbishop of the metropolitan church of Myra. He was imprisoned for his faith under the emperor Diocletian, was released by Constantine, and is thought to have been present at the Council of Nicaea.

The facts about St. Nicholas may be sketchy, but legends abound. To read more about St. Nicholas go to:
<https://www.faithward.org/st-nicholas-day/>

His feast day is an important festival in many places and nearly universally associated with gift-giving, but it is from the Dutch celebration that we in the U.S. draw much of our Santa tradition.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CELEBRATING ST. NICHOLAS DAY AT HOME

- Follow the Dutch tradition of eating a festive dinner with family or friends December 5, St. Nicholas Eve. Tell the story of the saint's habit of secret giving and care for the poor.
- Since our stocking-hanging ritual comes directly from the St. Nicholas tradition, consider moving it to St. Nicholas Eve. You will be providing a welcome foretaste of Christmas to come as you return significance to the act of small, simple giving. Let everyone into the fun of being St. Nicholas to each other by buying or making small presents for each other that you take turns "secretly" placing in the stockings after bedtime.
- Bake holiday treats early and freeze them. Then, celebrate a visit from St. Nicholas with a special breakfast the morning of the sixth. Include on your table a sample of each kind of cookie for each person. Use your imagination and the time available to plan as festive or as simple a celebration as you like. Keep the remaining cookies frozen until Christmas Day and serve them throughout the twelve days of Christmas instead of during Advent.
- Begin a tradition of anonymous gift-giving in your family by watching for ways each can help the others secretly during Advent. Be St. Nicholas to each other with small gifts or notes of appreciation or encouragement or by making a dreaded chore magically disappear.



Nativity of the Lord Christmas Eve Service at 5pm Sunday, December 24



WEEKLY Bible Study/Lecture

Meets every Wednesday at 11am in the Lounge followed by the “Lunch Bunch” from 12:15-1pm. Come and join this group of men and women who meet every Wednesday at 11AM in the lounge to learn about the Bible. We talk about the words of Jesus and how they affect our hearts and our lives. We hear about Elijah (fire on the mountain), and Jonah (the whale story), and Naomi (quite the mother-in-law). Our leader, James Jones, teaches us about geography of the area, the mountains and rivers, the Roman roads, and how they affected life at that time. Studying the Bible in a group opens up questions and insights that we would never see on our own. Join us. You don't have to say a word. Just being there yourself adds to the spirit of the group. Let your mind experience the peace and love to be found here every week. If you like, you can bring a sandwich. After the lesson we move to the table to eat, relax and chat. There is no pressure. We understand if you just need to be on your way. †



Golden Anniversary!!!

Peggy and Jack Horney, along with their children and grandchildren, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary by revisiting the Old Stone Church where they were married and taking photos. Peggy wore her original wedding veil. Congratulations!!!



To be in compliance with fire and building codes, four lighted emergency exit signs were installed in the sanctuary.



Several fire extinguishers were remounted in the Education Building so they are no higher than five feet off the ground to be in compliance with fire codes.



Slide bolts on exterior doors on the Education Building were removed to be in compliance with fire codes.

Property Projects Appeal

Our church property, like your own home, needs constant maintenance to provide a safe environment. This year we will have to pay out more than we originally expected for property projects. Upper Saddle River has a new fire and code enforcement official who has been working his way through the town to bring the various buildings up to code. We were cited for over 20 violations. New signage and repairs to our Education Building and Sanctuary have cost us more than \$4000. When the solar panels were installed on the east side of the Education Building, only the roof under the panels was replaced. The remaining roof has exceeded its life expectancy and has been patched as much as possible. We replaced the rest of the roof at a cost of \$25,000. When the parsonage was vacated two years ago, we had it professionally cleaned and made some minor repairs. The contractors that have been brought in to provide estimates for the many needed repairs and updates to prepare the building for our next pastor or possible tenant estimate that it will cost \$50,000 at a minimum to make the parsonage whole. We have all of these expenses on top of the regular wear and tear on three aging buildings.

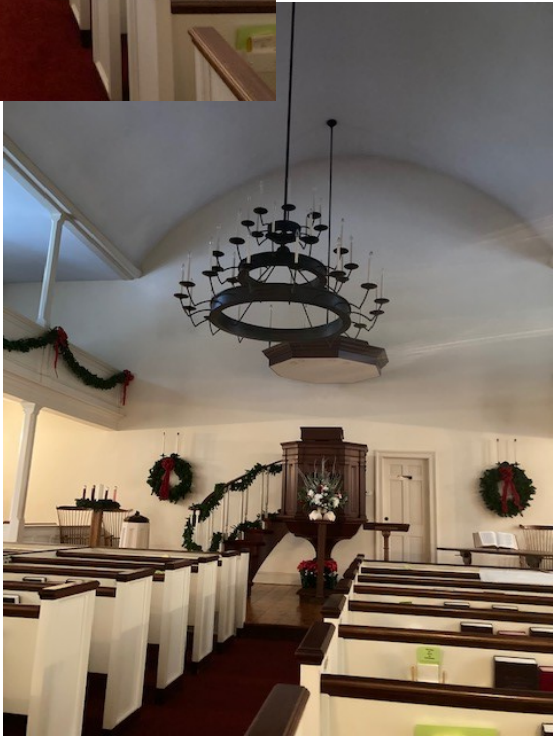
We know this is a time when many are experiencing higher costs in their own lives, and asking for funding from you above and beyond your normal contributions may be challenging. We humbly ask that you consider designating a contribution to fund our property projects.

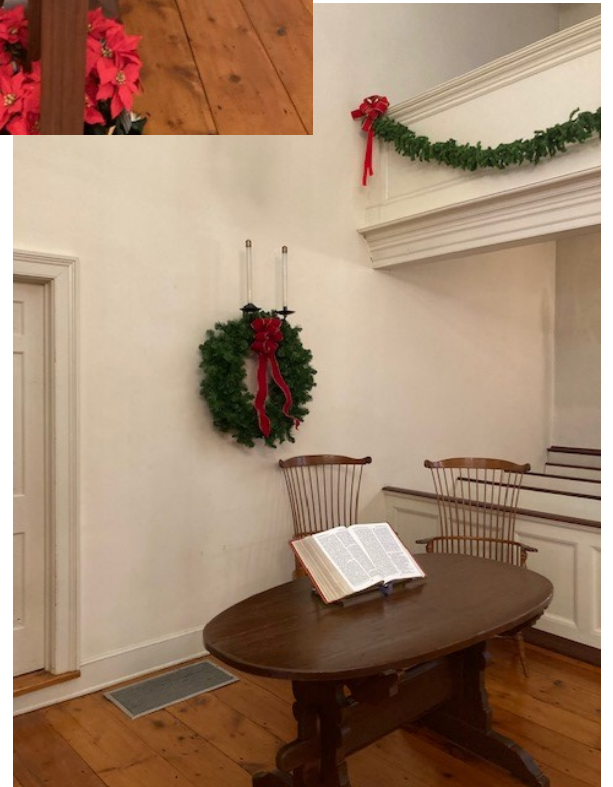
In Christ's Name,

Your Consistory
Members



~ Festive Advent Decorations ~





After Worship Church Socials

There is a sign-up sheet in the back of the sanctuary for Sunday Iced Tea Socials. They are weekly, immediately following the service and provide us with a chance to chat and catch up with our church family while enjoying a treat or two (or three!).



Website and Social Media

Have you checked out our website or social media feeds recently? There are new postings several times a week on Facebook and Instagram. Be sure to check them out and follow and/or give us a “like.”

Website: <https://oldstonechurchonline.org/>

Facebook: Old Stone/Saddle River Reformed Church

Instagram: oldstonechurchnj



Community Announcements



“All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.” –Acts 1:14

All RCA sisters and friends are warmly invited to join us for the **She Is Called Advent Prayer Gatherings, held on Thursdays, November 30, December 7, and December 14, 2023, from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Eastern.**

Make time in your busy holiday schedules to gather like Mary and “certain women” in the Upper Room all those years ago, to pray and share together as sisters in Christ. Rest assured you can bring all the joys, challenges, and hopes of your life and ministry, knowing that in this sacred, virtual space they will be held with love, compassion, and understanding. Our time will start together with a brief devotion and check in, then move to breakouts for smaller group connecting and praying. We will end back together in the full group for closing prayer and encouragement.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdFjnK1kqN23r157>



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“Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.” –1 Thessalonians 5:11
 Any questions, contact Rev. Liz Testa at Ltesta@rca.org or women@rca.org.

USR Historical Society: HELP WANTED! The USR Historical Society is seeking adults who are interested in getting involved as volunteers at our great community resource—the Hopper Goetschius House Museum. The Historical Society meets on the first Monday evening of the month at 7:30pm downstairs at the Library. We’d be happy to welcome you on December 4th. Come and see what we are all about! Please check out our website (usrhistoricalsociety.org) and RSVP there on the Contact page.

USR Cares Invites USR Seniors to join them for one or more of their upcoming Thursday events at the USR Library and for one or more of their group outings. Lunch catered by Uncle Giuseppe’s before the Library’s screening of movies the first Thursday of each month. Upcoming dates are December

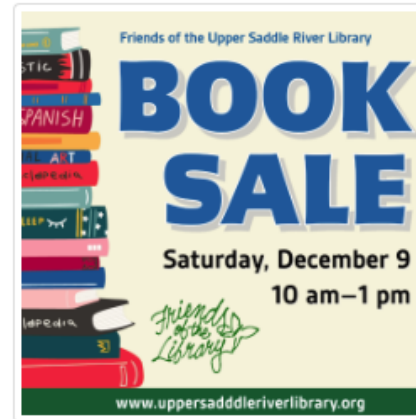
7th, January 4th, and February 1st.

Third Thursdays - Breakfast snacks and guest speakers, activities, and games the third Thursday of every month. Upcoming dates are December 21st, January 18th, and February 22nd.

USR Cares is also planning two group outings. The first will be a trip to see a matinee performance of Man of La Mancha at Bergen County Community College’s Bergenstages on December 9th. Transportation will be provided from the USR library. Tickets are \$10 each.

The second is a private group outing to the Lorrimer sanctuary in Franklin Lakes. This will be a wreath making workshop in early December. Interested seniors should send a note to them at usrcares@gmail.com and we will poll the group for the best possible date for the outing. \$25 fee includes materials.

Interested seniors should rsvp to USR Cares one week prior to each Thursday event at usrcares@gmail.com or 201-749-1615. Information about USR Cares is available at www.usrcares.com.



Women’s Bible Study Please consider joining us for a simple Bible Study at the **Ramapo Reformed Church**. Pastor Mary will lead the group through various scripture readings in the style of Lectio Divina. No preparation is necessary! We will meet in the **Coffee Room of the church building (100 Island Rd)**. We will meet every other Tuesday through June. **The dates for December are 12/12 and 12/26.**

USR GARBAGE AND RECYCLING COLLECTIONS
Curbside Bulky Trash:
Friday, December 15, 2023

REFORMED CHURCH CENTER
NEW BRUNSWICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

presents
The 2023-2024 Poppen-Young Lecture

WORSHIP THAT DISMANTLES POWER AND PRIVILEGE




Presenter
Rev. Adriene Thorne
Senior Minister
The Riverside Church in the City of New York

Respondent
Rev. Neal D. Presa
Associate Professor of Preaching and Worship
New Brunswick Theological Seminary

Thursday, December 14, 2023 • 12:00 p.m. (EST) • Online

Camp Snowball 23-24

We are so excited to welcome campers and families back this fall and winter! We have 4 sessions planned and cannot wait to see you there! Registration for the remaining 3 sessions is open!

- Session 1: November 10-12, 2023
- Session 2: January 12-14, 2024
- Session 3: February 23-25, 2024
- Session 4: April 19-21, 2024



Rev. Mark Ennis of the Clinton Avenue Reformed Church in Bergenfield is looking for **ESL teachers for their Spanish-speaking outreach program.** Anyone with an interest can call the church office: 201-384-2454.

Registration and Volunteer Application are on our website!
campwarwick.org/camp-snowball

REFORMED CHURCH CENTER
NEW BRUNSWICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

presents

MISSIONS IN A POST-COLONIAL WORLD




Presenters
JP Sundararajan
Director of Global Mission
Reformed Church in America
James Jinhong Kim
Horace G. Underwood Chair in Global Christianity
Associate Professor of Missiology and Global Christianity

Wednesday, 17 January 2024 • 12:00 p.m. (EST) • Online

The Center for Food Action in Mahwah at 90 Ridge Road is open M-F from 10am-2pm to accept donations. Their most needed items for the holidays are Supermarket Gift Cards, Canned Yams, Canned Cranberry Sauce, Canned Gravy, Canned Fruit, Canned Vegetables, Hearty Soup, Stuffing, Rice: white, brown, wild grain, Macaroni and cheese, and Coffee & Tea.

Call 988 For Mental Health Emergencies

The Federal Communications Commission approved a 3-digit dialing code, 988, for mental health crisis and suicide prevention. The 988 line will operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for calls, texts, and chat.

**UPPER SADDLE RIVER
PROUD TO BE
STIGMA-FREE**

**Senior HelpLine
(201) 336-7400**

A service of the
**Aging and Disability Resource Connection
(ADRC)**
Bergen County
Department of Human Services
Division of Senior Services



December Birthdays & Anniversaries

Jon Peet	12/1
Jay Breen	12/2
Andrew Dente	12/2
Landon Peet	12/2
Gail Wershing	12/3
Carol Ciancia	12/4
Suzanne Peters	12/6
Fred Hampton	12/17
Larry Gorga	12/20
Jack Tudisco	12/21
Cathy Lowden	12/25
Nancy Peet	12/30

Jeff Giletto & Ashley Hildreth
12/31

Any updates or additions, please email the church office at srrcoffice@verizon.net

If you have anything for the JANUARY newsletter please email the church office at srrcoffice@verizon.net.



Saddle River Reformed Church

worshiping at
Old Stone Church
500 East Saddle River Road
Upper Saddle River, NJ 07458
201-327-5242
srrcoffice@verizon.net
www.OldStoneChurchOnline.org

