



Red Clay Creek

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

500 McKennans Church Road
Wilmington DE 19808
(302) 998-0434 / rccpc.org

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT / SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025 / 10 AM

Rooted in Love, Lighting the Way

We're glad you're here. If needed, a family area with CCTV is in the narthex near the front doors, and our nursery is open for young children. Restrooms are available by exiting out the side door near the pulpit and turning left. After worship, join us for Coffee Hour in Founders Hall by the main parking lot. Please silence your cell phone as we enter into worship.

GATHER

PRELUDE Tidings of Comfort and Joy

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

One: The Lord be with you.
Many: **And also with you.**

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Ewa Papież, Ray & Catherine Shafer, Kathi Way

Many: We give thanks for all that God has already given you and we welcome you in Christian love.

MUSICAL OFFERING Rise Up, Shepherd and Follow

*CALL TO WORSHIP & LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

One: Today we light the candle of love, remembering the star that led seekers to kneel before Christ. In that humble place, love took on flesh and lived among us.

Many: **May this light draw us toward the love that holds all things together.**

One: Your love, O God, is the first light we ever knew and the truest light we will ever follow. It shines beyond our divisions, crosses every border, and welcomes every traveler.

Many: **Illuminate our lives with your love, Holy One. Lead us in compassion, mercy, and grace as we follow the star of Christ.**

*(SUNG) There's a star in the east on Christmas morn.
 Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
 It will lead to the place where the Christ was born.
 Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
 Follow, follow; rise up, shepherd, and follow.
 Follow the star of Bethlehem. Rise up, shepherd, and follow.*

One: Let us pray. God of love, as this candle burns, remind us that your love reaches us wherever we are. Make space in our hearts for your light to dwell, and help us reflect your love in all we do.

Many: Amen.

*HYMN 132

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: God of signs and stars, we confess that we do not always follow your light. We become distracted by our own paths, drawn toward comfort, familiarity, or fear.

Many: **We lose sight of your leading. We forget to look up. We hesitate to take the next faithful step.**

One: You invite us to trust the light you place before us - but we cling to what we know.

Many: **Forgive us, O God. Lift our eyes again. Set our feet on the path of hope, and teach us to follow the star of Christ.**

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Hear the good news: The same God who set a star in the sky also sets grace in our lives. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Many: **Thanks be to God!**

*SUNG RESPONSE

Love Has Come

*Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;
What is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.
Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.*

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Please greet those around you, wishing them “peace” or “the peace of Christ.”

CHILDREN'S MOMENT & THE LORD'S PRAYER

At the conclusion, we look forward to welcoming all children through 8th grade to the nursery or their Sunday school classes, as the congregation prepares to hear the sermon.

SUNG RESPONSE

Now the Heavens Start to Whisper

*Heavy clouds that block the moonlight now begin to drift away.
Diamond brilliance through the darkness shines the hope of coming day.
Christ, the morning star of splendor, gleams within a world grown dim.
Heaven's ember fans to fullness; hearts grow warm to welcome him.*

MUSICAL OFFERING

Midnight Noel

PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

CALL TO THE OFFERING

We invite you to make an online donation or by placing a check or cash in the collection plate. Envelopes are available in the pews for specified giving. The gray envelopes are for our Roots & Rays Fund, which goes to creative outreach projects in the community.



MUSICAL OFFERING See Amid the Winter's Snow (arr. Lisa Nichols)

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE As with Gladness Men of Old

*As they offered gifts most rare at thy manger, rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heavenly king.*

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

HYMN 144 **In the Bleak Midwinter**

LISTEN

SCRIPTURE LESSON Matthew 2:1-12

MUSICAL OFFERING I Wonder as I Wander

SERMON Follow the Star: Pedals Off Rev. Dr. Phillips

SEND

*HYMN 115 **Away in a Manger**

BENEDICTION

MUSICAL BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Angel Tidings



Thanks to today's worship participants:

Bell Choir & Chancel Choir, *Music Ministry*
Charlie Hannagan, Dinyar Vania, *Soloists*
Mark Cozine, *Usher Captain*
Karen Beare, *Greeter*

The flowers today are given in honor of the 70th Wedding Anniversary
Ruth & Max Matteson, with love from the Aument Family.



Join us for coffee & fellowship in Founders Hall following the postlude!
We will also be having our Cookie Walk Fundraiser to support our Mission to
Maine service trip this summer, Cookie Decorating & Pictures with Santa and
a Christmas Hoodie Pick-Up & Group Photo.

Through a series of in-person messages, devotionals, and worship
opportunities, we hope to keep you connected to—and nurtured by—the
Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church community. Make sure you're signed up
for our Thursday eNews, Facebook, and Instagram accounts. Visit
www.rccpc.org.



WELCOME

New Members

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

—1 Corinthians 12 :12-14

Ewa Papiez

Ewa calls both Wilmington, DE and Katowice, Poland “home”. She currently enjoys retirement in Hockessin, DE. She is a widow with two adult children, Maja and Adam.



Kathi Way

I was born in New York City. My family moved to Delaware when I was 4 and I have been in the Newark area for most of my life. I graduated from East Carolina University in 1969. I was married to my husband George in 1976. Although now retired, my career focused on development of services to improve opportunities for children and their families. My son, Tripp Way, is also a member at RCCPC.

WELCOME

New Members

Ray & Catherine Shafer

Ray and Catherine have lived in the Delaware area for over 50 years. Ray graduated from Salesianum High School and University of Delaware before entering the U. S. Navy/Navy Reserve where he served for 28 years retiring as a Commander. He is most proud of being an Iraq War Veteran. Ray just recently retired, after 21 years of service, from Amtrak Railroad as the Logistics Manager.

As a native Delawarean, Catherine graduated from Christiana High School, Millersville University, and Western Maryland College. After retiring from teaching 27 years, she took a position at Mt. Cuba Center where she learned to love native plants and is constantly adding to her garden beds much to Ray's chagrin.

Together they love to hike, bike ride, volunteer their time, travel and explore, help out their family, and expand their knowledge. They just recently enrolled in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute through the University of Delaware. But most importantly, they love spending time together with their four-legged furry family member, Molly. (If you meet her, don't tell her she's a dog. She hasn't figured it out yet!)



The Poinsettias in the Sanctuary are given by the following:

From:

Ann Thomas
Arlene Thompson
Blanche Pando
Carol, Kyle Jr., & Eric
Carolyn Falasca
Carolyn Geshner Diehl
Carolyn Geshner Diehl
Cindy & Bob Gamble
Dave & Jane Conly
Debbie Wersinger
Diane Freed
Dianne & Bob Carter and Family
Dianne Whittaker
Dianne Whittaker
Donna Reilly
Gail Ahrens
Gail Ahrens, daughter
Gail Bouck
Gail Bouck
Green-Kocher Families
Holly Martinez
Jacqui Kolle, daughter
Jane & Bruce Spencer
Jane Wood
Jim & Christine Fischer
Jim & Christine Fischer
Joyce, Pam, Heather, Stephanie & Lily
Judy Krein & Family
Karen & Jim Caldas
Li-Hwa Tseng
Linda & Matthew Hanna
Lorraine & Richard Gilmore
Lorraine & Richard Gilmore
Lynn & Jim, Chloe & Sheldon
Marcia Hastings
Mary Jane Weldin
Matthew & Linda Hanna
Matthew & Linda Hanna and Family
Noah

In Memory Of:

Meredith "Tom" Thomas
Leon L. Thompson
Jim Pando
Kyle Outlaw
Angelo Falasca
Eileen, Kathleen, Judy, Michael & Richard Diehl
Glenn, Nancy & Robert Geshner
The Brooks and Gamble families
Our parents
Jim & Mary Hunter
Herbert & Elizabeth Freed
Wanda & James Corrigan
Beloved Parents, MaryLou & Jim Taylor
Patty & Steve Taylor
JoAnne Strickler
Jim Ahrens
Wanda & James Corrigan
Fraser & Beryl Bouck
Steven Yamazaki
Doris & Bill Green and Linda Kocher
My brother, John, Uncle Bob and Uncle Ron
Joseph & Caroline Fedena
Our daughter, Melissa
Henry Eby Herr
Wallace & Pearl Fischer
Joseph & Jean Celano
Roger McClellan
Edward Krein
Darden & Lynn Rodden
My parents, Fu-Yun & Hsu Hsin Tseng
Phyllis Musser
Joseph & Helen Ambrogio
Lisa Febre
Missy
Loved Ones
My husband, Paul Weldin
John & Connie Hanna
Phyllis Musser
My Mom



The Poinsettias in the Sanctuary are given by the following:

From:

Pamela Saylor Droke
Patricia Nash Christel & family
Peggy Keay Germain
Pei-Yi Lo
Rev. Emily Schwenker
Ron & Linda Reisor
Ron & Linda Reisor
Sharon Meyer
Sharon Meyer, daughter
Steve & Mary Cay
Steve & Mary Cay
Suzanne Courter-Jann
The Brown & Kissell Families
The Christel Family
The Galinat Family
The Haggertys
The Klair Family
The Klair Family
The Phillips Family
The Putscher Family
Tosh & Norm Carlson
Vicki Smith & Ted Harting

In Memory Of:

Family, friends & loved ones
James Nash
Bill Keay
My parents, Tso-Hsun & Juo-Chu Chang Lo
Loved Ones who have passed
Ron's parents, Peg & Johnny Reisor
Linda's Parents, Nancy & Don Hogeland
Harry Meyer, Jr.
Grover Hale
Steve & Virginia Armstrong
George & Rosemary Sausen
William & Eleanore Courter
Margaret K. Kissell
Scout Christel (our beloved furry family member)
Loved Ones
Kenny Haggerty, Jr.
Richard & Barbara Klair
Marc Klair
Gary Buzzell
Elizabeth Rada
Loved Ones
Our parents

From:

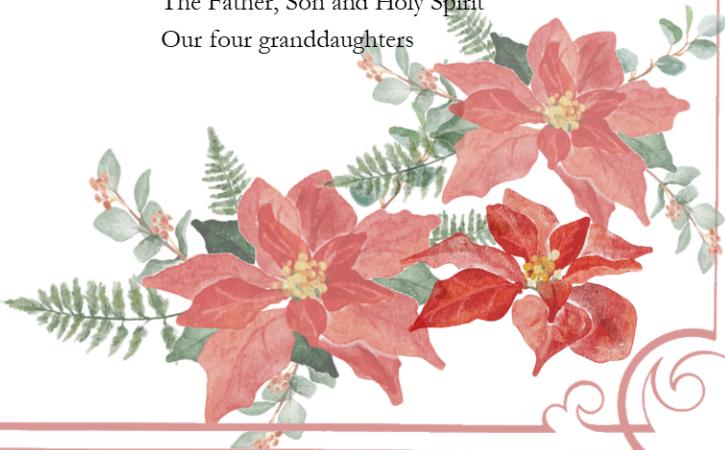
John & Susan Welsh
Pamela Saylor Droke
Rich & Debbie Behling

In Honor Of:

Our Grandchildren: Reagan, Logan & Emma Rose Welsh and Andrew & Emma Lynn Hoagland
The Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Our four granddaughters

To the Glory of God:

Barbara P. Fox
Dave & Mary Young
Deborah McNesby
Ellen Hinrichs
Rev. Emily Schwenker
The Galinat Family
The Gast Family



Red Clay Creek Presbyterian invites you to
its *Signature Services & Events* during the coming year.

CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE — December 24th, 2025

- ◆ Family Service with Impromptu Pageant | 4PM
- ◆ Holy Night Service with Candlelight | 8PM
- ◆ Candlelight & Communion | 11PM

ROOTS AND RAYS SERVICE CHALLENGE — Feb. 22nd—Mar. 22nd, 2026

A month-long service effort each year, that directs our intention to the needs of our community.

HOLY WEEK 2026

- ◆ Maundy Thursday — April 2nd; Good Friday — April 3rd
- ◆ Resurrection Remembrance Service — April 5th | 9:30AM Worship
- ◆ Easter Sunday — April 5th | 10AM Worship

KIRKIN' O' THE TARTAN — April 26th, 2026 | 10AM

Kirk is the Scottish word for church, so a church celebration and blessing of the tartans in our Presbyterian church honors both local and church heritage since it was the Scots who brought the Presbyterian Church to America.

OUTDOOR SERVICE & PICNIC — June 7th, 2026 | 10AM

Join us in the back meadow for worship and our annual picnic.

SUMMER ARTS CAMPS — July 2026 | 9AM-12PM

Kids will have music, drama, visual arts, snacks, and FUN, culminating with BINGO and performance night, as well as Youth Sunday.

HOECOMING SUNDAY — September 6th, 2026 | 10AM

We mark our return to regular church programming with the start of our fall sermon series and Sunday School kick off.

FALL CELEBRATION SUNDAY — October 25th, 2026 | 10AM

A joyous worship service where we give Bibles to our 3rd graders and dedicate our pledges, followed by outdoor trunk-or-treat and a flag football game.

ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY — November 15th, 2026 | 10AM

We give thanks for God's many blessings and our rich history of over 300 years.

WELCOME TO RED CLAY

For LARGE print bulletins or children's bulletins, please ask an Usher.
Restrooms are available. Just ask!

Welcome to worship, welcome to Red Clay, welcome home! Rooted in God's abiding love for all, our church is lighting the way for friendship, compassion, and service. All are welcome, for Jesus gathers us together even as we divide ourselves by politics, denomination, or whatever labels the world puts on us. Please join us for coffee hour in Founder's Hall after service, and stop by the welcome cart by the front entrance to learn more about our community. We hope you will worship with us again soon! If you are interested in deepening your participation, or if you just love Red Clay, it's time to think about membership! Contact Elder Karen Vordemberge at kvordemberge@gmail.com.

Here at Red Clay, we have numerous groups that are open and that welcome newcomers, including, e.g., Quilters, Crafters, "Friends and Fellowship" free luncheon for seniors, Bible study, ROMEOs ("Retired Old Men Eating Out"), Centering Prayer and "The Arcaders" social group for GenX and Millennials. Details can be found at www.rcipc.org!

Children: Nursery care is available from 9:45AM through the conclusion of worship in Room 305 (just down the hallway from the sanctuary). After the Children's Moment, Pre-K - Kindergarteners will adjourn to Room 303, Grades 1-3 will adjourn to Room 206, and Grades 4-8 will adjourn to Room 202/204.



UPCOMING EVENT SPOTLIGHT

TONIGHT—A Red Clay Family Christmas at 7:00 PM!

All are invited to join us in the sanctuary TONIGHT at 7 pm for this holiday songfest. Following the event, we will have food (including a chocolate fountain!) and fellowship in Founders Hall.

All are welcome!

RED CLAY CREEK PRESBYTERIAN — MINISTERS, STAFF & CHAIRS

Rev. Dr. Nathaniel D. Phillips, *Senior Pastor/Head of Staff*
Rev. Emily Schwenker ♦ Rev. Dr. Philip Jones

Jeffrey Miller, *Director of Music*
Deena Andrews, *Director of Children's Choir*
Lisa Nichols, *Bell Choir Director*

Rachele Gilmore, *Director of Community Life* ♦ Ben Andrews, *Director of Christian Formation*
Barbara Vanderkraats, *Pastoral Care Coordinator*
Jamie Russell, *Director of Children's Ministries*
Judy Lozier, *Nursery Director* ♦ Sofia Martin, *Nursery Support*
Delaney Christel, Josephine DeCaire, Quiara Smith, *Sunday School Teachers*

Julie Reeder, *Office Coordinator* ♦ Dinyar Vania, *Facilities Manager*
Kelley Norton, *Administrative Assistant* ♦ Anthony M. Condoluci-Smith, *Financial Associate*

Charlie Hannagan, *Technology Support*
A. Leonhard, S. Armstrong, K. Barton, A. Bloom, D. Howarth, J. Schubel, P. Worrell, *Livestream Production*

Nancy James, *Clerk of Session* ♦ Kathy Ciabattoni, *Deacon Moderator*
Bill Ciabattoni, *Belong Chair* ♦ Darlyn Green-Kocher, *Nurture Chair*
Linda Reisor, *Reach Chair* ♦ Lois Galinat, *Rejoice Chair*
Brandon Wallace, *Finance Chair* ♦ John Gast, *Personnel Chair*
Mark Cozine, *Home Chair* ♦ Scott McHenry, *Administration Chair*
Andrew Bloom, *Community Partners* ♦ Marcia Kelly, *Memory Garden Chair*

* For a complete list of all Session Ruling Elders and Board of Deacons members, please refer to <https://www.rcpc.org>.*

A NOTE ON THE LOGO

Our church has "roots" in the community that date back to 1722. We have been a good neighbor when we were surrounded by farmland up until now when we are surrounded by the suburbs. Our history helps us remember a time when people helped one another out because that was the right thing to do. We hope to be a sign that this kind of community can still exist. We also believe that, in order for that community to exist, we need to stay "rooted" in the Good News that God has chosen to love us - not because of who we are, but because of who God is. We call that grace.

That is where the "rays" come in. We hope to extend our love, and the love we know from the graciousness of God, in many ways today. This means engaging in friendships with those that Jesus would have made friends with - those that feel isolated for any number of reasons. We know we will never be perfect at that, but we will try! We are especially aware that churches have long held back from friendship with others based on age, economics, sexuality, race, disability, and the list goes on. We seek to be something different than that. There are so many stories about how Jesus entered into life-affirming friendships with those that others wouldn't. We seek to be like Jesus.

Right there, in the center of it all, is the **cross**. For us, the cross is a "Tree of Life." It represents how God broke into this world to establish a new way of being alive. It symbolizes how God calls us to love with freedom, with recklessness even, if it means connecting the world to the wonder of God's transformative presence.



132 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice



1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to-day;
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man-ger now.
 He has o-pened heav-en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!



Carols using two languages, like this one dating from at least the 14th century, belong to a special group called "macaronic," the original languages here being German and Latin. Though the present version is only in English, it is sung to the traditional German folk melody.

In the Bleak Midwinter

144

1 In the bleak mid-winter, frost - y wind made moan;
 2 Our God, heaven can - not hold him, nor earth sus - tain;
 3 An - gels and arch - an - gels may have gath - ered there;
 4 What can I give him, poor as I am?

earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
 heaven and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign:
 cher - u - bim and ser - a-phim thronged the air;
 If I were a shep - herd, I would bring a lamb;

snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
 but his moth - er on - ly, in her maid - en bliss,
 if I were a wise man, I would do my part;

in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
 the Lord God in - car - nate, Je - sus Christ.
 wor - shiped the be - lov - ed with a kiss.
 yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

Though this text describes winter weather in England rather than in Palestine, the poet is using familiar surroundings as a means of making the Nativity more immediate and personal. The tune name honors a Gloucestershire village near the composer's birthplace in Cheltenham.

115

Away in a Manger

Capo 3: (D)

F

(G)

B \flat

(D)

F



1 A-way in a manger, no crib for his bed,
 2 The cat-tle are low-ing; the poor ba-by wakes,
 3 Be near me, Lord Je-sus; I ask thee to stay

(A7)

C7

(D)

F



the lit-tle Lord Je-sus laid down his sweet head.
 but lit-tle Lord Je-sus, no cry-ing he makes.
 close by me for-ev-er and love me, I pray.

(G)

B \flat

(D)

F



The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
 I love thee, Lord Je-sus; look down from the sky,
 Bless all the dear chil-dren in thy ten-der care,

(A7)

C7

(D)

F

(Em)

Gm

(A7)

C7

(D)

F



the lit-tle Lord Je-sus a-sleep on the hay.
 and stay by my side un-til morn-ing is nigh.
 and fit us for heav-en to live with thee there.

Though erroneously attributed to Martin Luther, this anonymous carol has North American roots, probably originating among Pennsylvania Lutherans. Although more than forty melodies have been connected with these words, this tune was among the earliest written for them.