



# Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

November 24th, 2024, 3pm

The Presbyterian Church at Shrewsbury

& Monmouth Reform Temple

**Words of Welcome**

Rev. Katja Gruening

**Prelude**

“A Mighty Fortress”  
*Jubilee Bells*

Setting by Kevin Stewart

## **Call to Worship - Psalm 105:1-3**

Leader: O give thanks to God, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples.

**People: Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works.**

Leader: Glory in his holy name;

**People: let the hearts of those who seek God rejoice.**

## **Blessing for Interfaith Connections**

We have been formed with a bias  
for curiosity and belonging that can manifest  
either as sacred interest or tense tribalism.

We have misunderstood  
faithfulness as certainty in what we already have,  
grace as a gift that whispers conditions,  
interfaith dialogue as purely academic.

But there are holy pleasures waiting  
in every tradition and scripture, to amplify  
our awe and wonder for the divine,  
to stretch what you thought could be true.

God bless your exploration, your relationships,  
your open hearts willing to be changed by  
the wideness of God’s active mercy,  
the myriad faces of God’s image,  
the strength of love that stretches  
beyond a single tradition.

**\* Hymn: #336 We Gather Together**

**We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing;  
You chasten and hasten God's will to make known;  
The wicked oppressing now cease from distressing,  
Sing praises to Your name, You forget not Your own.**

**Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining,  
Ordaining, maintaining God's kingdom divine;  
So from the beginning the fight we were winning;  
Thou, Lord, wast at our side; All glory be Thine!**

**We all do extol Thee, Thou leader triumphant,  
And pray that Thou still our defender wilt be.  
Let Thy congregation escape tribulation;  
Thy name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free!**

**Prayer against Anti-Semitism**

This has been a year where divisiveness, hatred, and acts of anti-Semitism have found unprecedented expression in our nation. The Presbyterian Church at Shrewsbury and the Monmouth Reform Temple stand together, witnessing our over 60-year commitment to unity, love, and justice.

May our strength come from our faith. May we continue to support and protect each other and receive the support of one another with gratitude and humility. May our fear inspire compassion, so we can pursue justice and not revenge, peace, and not more violence.

We commit, here and now, to pursuing righteousness and compassion, justice and mercy, peace and understanding, love and friendship between us and the communities in which we live. May all those who seek to do harm be frustrated in their efforts. May all who seek to do good be upheld in their work, and not grow weary in their well-doing. Give us grace and opportunity for such action. May the shelter of God's peace spread over us and over all who dwell in our community, our country, and throughout the earth.

And let us all say, **Amen.**

**Prayer for Peace**

Leader: O God of many names, Lover of all nations,

**People: We pray for peace  
in our hearts,  
in our homes,  
in our nations,  
in our world,**

Leader: the peace of your will,

**People: the peace of our need.**

**\* Passing of the Peace**

*You are invited to greet your neighbor with a word of peace:*

*“Peace be with you”, “Shalom”*

**Special Music**

“Hashkivenu - A Prayer for The Night”

Rachelle Nelson

*Cantor Gabrielle Clissold*

**Thanksgiving Litany**

Leader: Generous God, for the abundance of your blessings to us  
day by day and year by year,

**People: We give you our thanks.**

For the simple pleasures of life:

for garden harvests, coffee conversation, and familiar surroundings,

For health and strength to appreciate the wonder of life,

For needs met and desires fulfilled,

**We give you our thanks.**

For foods distributed to nourish body and spirit,

For homes which supply shelter, which nurture order and beauty,

and offer hospitality,

**We give you our thanks.**

With hearts that forgive as freely as you have forgiven,

With enthusiasm of spirit for the gift of life,

With music which declares your everlasting goodness,

With prayers for mutual understanding and peace,

**We worship you with joy.**

With creative pursuits which contribute our God-given talents,

With words which honor you as Creator,

With time volunteered and dedicated to service in congregation and community,

With years committed to extending your love,

**We worship you with joy.**

With gifts of money which reach farther than we can manage ourselves,

With deeds done in service of neighbor and stranger,

With holy days set apart to celebrate your goodness and grace,

With family and friends distant and nearby,

**We worship you, God, with grateful hearts and joyful spirit.**

**Alleluia. Amen.**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 100

**Hymn: #37 Let All Things Now Living**

Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving  
to God our Creator triumphantly raise;  
who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us,  
by guiding us on to the end of our days.  
God's banners are o'er us; pure light goes before us,  
a pillar of fire shining forth in the night:  
till shadows have vanished, all fearfulness banished,  
as forward we travel from light into light.

By law God enforces, the stars in their courses,  
the sun in its orbit obediently shine;  
the hills and the mountains, the rivers and fountains,  
the depths of the ocean proclaim God divine.  
We too should be voicing our love and rejoicing;  
with glad adoration, a song let us raise,  
till all things now living unite in thanksgiving:  
to God in the highest, hosanna and praise!

**Sermon:** "Gratitude in a Time of Challenge"

Rabbi Renee Edelman

**Offering**

*The collection this afternoon is dedicated to bless the charitable work of Interfaith Neighbors. Serving Monmouth County, their outreach includes nutrition, affordable housing, community development, early childhood education, career preparation, and more!*

**Choral Anthem** "Give Thanks to the Lord"  
*Combined Choirs*

Dave and Jean Perry

**Thanksgiving Proclamation of 1789, President George Washington**

*As this year's proclamation is not published yet, we return to words from early in our nation's history. Washington's words which give thanks for religious liberty among other values foundational to our nation are as important to be shared today as then.*

**Prayer for our Nation**

We give thanks this day for all who call our great nation home.  
For our human community, our common past and future hope.  
Renew in us our commitment to our foundational values of justice and freedom.  
Help us use the incredible gifts and talents you have empowered us with to  
embrace our neighbors and reach across our divisions. May we be defined not  
by the imperfections and flaws of our nations, or the shameful parts of our history,  
but by a commitment to shared high hopes and noble causes.  
May these prayers be not only for us, but especially for our nation's leaders, and  
all those who exercise authority in this land. God bless America.

**\* Hymn: #338 O Beautiful, For Spacious Skies**

**O Beautiful For Spacious Skies,  
For Amber Waves Of Grain,  
For Purple Mountain Majesties  
Above The Fruited Plain!  
America! America!  
God Shed His Grace On Thee,  
And Crown Thy Good With Brotherhood,  
From Sea To Shining Sea!**

**O Beautiful For Heroes Proved  
In Liberating Strife,  
Who More Than Self Their Country Loved,  
And Mercy More Than Life!  
America! America!  
May God Thy Gold Refine,  
Till All Success Be Nobleness,  
And Every Gain Divine!**

**O Beautiful For Patriot Dream  
That Sees Beyond The Years  
Thine Alabaster Cities Gleam  
Undimmed By Human Tears!  
America! America!  
God Shed His Grace On Thee,  
And Crown Thy Good With Brotherhood,  
From Sea To Shining Sea!**

**Responsive Reading:**

Leader: O God, we come so often with needs to be satisfied, but this day we come in gratitude for what we have and are.

**People: Grant us wisdom enough to look backward and be thankful;  
courage enough to look forward and be hopeful;  
faith enough to look upward and be humble;  
kindness enough to look outward and be helpful.**

Leader: And in the days ahead, help us to live the words we pray, so that You may look upon all we have done and find it good and worthy of Your blessing.

**The Priestly Benediction**

**Postlude**

**“America, Give Thanks”**

Setting by Valerie W. Stephenson

*Jubilee Bells*

*Please join us for a reception following the service  
in the Social Room, behind the Sanctuary.*

**Worship Leaders:**

Rabbi Renee Edelman

Rev. Katja Gruening

Cantor Gabrielle Clissold

Marcello Velame, PCAS Director of Music Ministries

Kathleen Healy-Wedworth, Organ and Piano

Alice Berman, MRT Choir Director

Dean Ross, MRT President

Sheila Leavit, MRT

Audrey Sergeant, PCAS

Patricia Apy, PCAS

The Jubilee Bell Choir

The Combined Choirs

Sue Starke, Peter Bruguere, Brian Sergeant, Ushers

Rich Vodhanel, Zoom Host

*We are grateful for the bountiful efforts and hospitality of the PCAS Fellowship Committee and all who contributed to the reception.*