



Presbyterian

R E P O R T E R

Volume 58, Issue 9, December 2019

A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

It's always interesting to reflect on all the advertisements/marketing campaigns coming our way these days. Thanksgiving has nearly been wiped off the map by Black Friday. I guess I've sort of come to expect such a focus on 'buying' when it comes to Christmas, but this is a new association for Thanksgiving. At least for me.

All this sort of thing reminds me just how prone we are to allow our focus on what's important about this time of year to slip. I don't blame the advertisers or, in fact, anyone. In this old world everyone has to 'work for a living', and the tv show exist because advertisers pay big bucks to push their products to the public. And these products are to be sold; they exist not primarily for us, the consumers, but to make money for those who produce them. That's first and foremost. That is, these people are NOT making this stuff for us, even though the advertising portrays thee products as being made precisely to meet our individual needs. This is nonsense, and, in the more rational parts of our consciousness, we know this. We thus are usually able to handle advertising and marketing campaigns very simply: by not taking them too seriously.

The problem is that such marketing is relentless. It never stops. Ever. AND this time of year sees all marketing and advertising rise to a fever pitch of intensity. Also, because we all want to give gifts to family and friends, we always get sucked into this seasonal storm of selling and buying. It's very much like having to go out into a summer thunder storm: you're going to get wet. Maybe only a little; maybe a great deal. That's the consequence of going out in a thunder storm.

But just as we can provide for ourselves things that will help us to get less wet, like a raincoat and hat or umbrella, so there are things available to help us not get so off track in this holy season. Holy meaning 'set apart', 'different'. Things like taking a few seconds, minutes at the beginning of the day and praying "Lord, help me remember you, remember things you said, things you did, as I go thru my day." Or, praying the well-known Jesus prayer (from the Russian orthodox tradition) several times throughout the course of the day: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Reading a few verses of scripture, or a psalm sometime during the day is always helpful. And coming to worship. . . well, that's so helpful it goes without saying. . . . but also simple things like looking around at the people we encounter throughout our days and noticing their expressions: happy, sad, concerned, worried, fearful, whatever. Complete strangers, but remember that God loves them just like he loves you and me. And if their expression is markedly sad or concerned, pray to the Lord for that stranger.

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*(A Note from the Pastor
continued from page 1.)*

Simple. Like driving along and noticing that so many trees have lost a lot of leaves, meaning that time, Fall, is moving on. And then allow the memories of times past to come before our mind's eyes, our children, small, growing up now grown. . . our spouse's face thru the years. . . realizing our blessings thru one another. . . remembering how God has sustained us thru the years.

Like I said, simple.

Intentionally doing such things can definitely help us to maintain focus on Christ, who is Christmas. We're going to slip, get caught up in the hectic busy-ness of this season at some point, perhaps several times, and succumb to advertising campaigns, and think I NEED to get that product! In other words, we're going to get wet because that's what happens when you go out into a thunder storm.

The wonder of God's grace is that he gets all of this, for God knows what it's like to live as a human being, to live in and through time. And because he does know, and does forgive us, over and over, let's all do what we can, each one of us, to stay focused on him in all of our hectic doings during these special days.



ORNAMENT MAKING WITH BOB AND SHARON KAZARY



On Sunday, November 17th members gathered with Bob and Sharon Kazary to welcome the Christmas season by making Christmas Tree and birdhouse ornaments.



Thank you for your faithful support of the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church during 2019. Remember that year-end contributions must be received by the church no later than **Sunday, December 29th** in order to qualify as 2019 contributions for tax purposes.

CONNECT WITH FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Thara Bonebreak	4-Dec
George Campbell	7-Dec
Katie Jan	7-Dec
Jane Williams	7-Dec
Aaron Stroup	14-Dec
Chandler Stroup	14-Dec
Samuel Kauffman	18-Dec
Robin Bissell	26-Dec
Jan Layman	28-Dec



Happy 100th Birthday to Thara Bonebreak! Thara celebrated her 100th birthday on Wednesday, December 4th!

Georgene McKenzie	5-Jan
Mike Fiscus	7-Jan
Royce Hodges	9-Jan
Sharon Kazary	9-Jan
Renee Kiddy	9-Jan
Alleine Courtney	12-Jan
Betty Richtmeyer	12-Jan
Juliana Parker	15-Jan
Brittany Jackson	18-Jan
John Brown	20-Jan
Grace Frickey	22-Jan
Barbara Leasure	25-Jan



Prayers and sympathy to Judy Stern and family upon the death of Judy's sister, Linda Foster, on Wednesday, October 30, 2019.

Prayers and sympathy to the family of Joyce Macy upon her death on Sunday, November 10, 2019. A memorial service was held at First Presbyterian Church on Friday, November 29th at 2:00 PM.



Tuesday, December 24, 2019
Office Open until Noon

Wednesday, December 25, 2019
CLOSED

Thursday, December 26, 2019
CLOSED

Friday, December 27, 2019
Open until Noon by Volunteer

Monday, December 30, 2019
Open until Noon by Volunteer

Tuesday, December 31, 2019
CLOSED

Wednesday, January 1, 2020
CLOSED





If you have not had a chance to turn in your pledge card, you may get one from the church office or you may locate one in the church pews this Sunday. Please help us to be able to plan our 2020 mission and ministry by making your pledge for the new year. Thank you!



Dear Friends,
 Thank you for your prayers and condolences upon the passing of my beloved sister. Our dear Linda appreciated the prayers and genuine concern you expressed for her during her prolonged illness. My entire family is humbled and grateful for your support. May God bless you.

Judy Stern

WELLNESS NEWS

EATING MINDFULLY THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

U.S. News & World Report this month published an article on an approach called mindful eating which could help us enjoy our food more and increase our well-being. Mindful eating is rooted in the concept of mindfulness which is about being aware of the present moment without judgment. The idea is to pay close attention to food and how it makes our body feel. This awareness can help us make better decisions about what foods to eat, why we need them, and the amount to eat. Here are some helpful tips:

- Arrive at the time of the meal pleasantly hungry and ready to eat, but not ravenous. Otherwise, you may eat quickly and become overfull before your stomach has time to tell your brain you are satisfied, which can take 20 minutes.
- Check-in with your body before the meal: “How hungry am I?” “What do I feel like eating?”
- Start with half as much food on your plate as you normally would. Then, later on, see if you really want more.
- Take it slow during the meal. Focus on and enjoy the food’s smell, taste, and texture. Really, really notice your food. Take time chewing and savoring. Slow down and tune in to that eating experience.
- Pause occasionally in between visiting with family and friends to pay attention to your senses and whether you’ve had enough.



REASON FOR THE SEASON

An Advent custom in Eastern Europe is for people to take pieces of straw and place it in a feeding trough to prepare the bed for baby Jesus. Each piece of straw represents something good that they do for others, so that by Christmas Eve, Jesus' bed might be filled with straw symbolizing acts of love and kindness. One act could be giving an "alternative" gift to others in need. Our Reason for the Season has several ministries that help neighbors in Cumberland and neighbors across the planet. Please consider prayerfully which one(s) God is nudging you toward, to help fill the manger.

Presbyterian Education Board (PEB) of Pakistan's mission is to improve Pakistan through quality education of Christian and Muslim students. Veda Gill, Executive Director of PEB, visited us last Fall and updated us on PEB's progress. We currently support seven students at Kinnaird Academy in Lahore. A scholarship of approximately \$60/month means that "our" students can continue their education for a better future for themselves and their country. www.friendsofpeb.org.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is helping those who were devastated by Hurricane Dorian when it made landfall in the Bahamas as a Category 5 hurricane on September 1 and stalled over the islands for 24 hours, causing massive damage. PDA is working with partners on the ground in the Bahamas to respond to immediate needs using a solidarity grant. Thus far, this grant has primarily helped evacuees in shelters with emergency needs. They are working with ACT Alliance to plan for long-term recovery support.

The Fuller Center for Housing is an ecumenical Christian, non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Americus, Georgia that builds and repairs homes for low-income families and individuals. It is active in 60 U.S. cities and 16 countries outside the U.S. Members of our church participated in a build in New Bern, NC this Fall and were very impressed with the organization's efficiency, focus, and results. One fund-raiser of Fuller is a cross-country bike ride. Groups have stayed at First Presbyterian during their trek.

Pressley Ridge's Homebuilder's Program is a family preservation program focusing on babies born addicted to substances, keeping newborns with their families, and transitioning them home safely. The Homebuilder's Program teaches parenting and coping skills as well as relapse prevention. It serves two families at a time, offering 40 hours of therapy in one month. It is evidence-based, with 96% of children remaining with their families after 6 months. Three additional programs help children also.

The Interfaith Food Pantry at 301 Cumberland St. was formed in 1975 by the 23 local churches of Interfaith Consortium. It is an all-volunteer emergency food resource for people who live in Cumberland. The pantry provides non-perishable food, and vouchers that can be used in three local markets to purchase perishable foods. Distribution of food is governed by family circumstances, family number and number of times the pantry has been utilized during the current year. Volunteers are always needed and welcome.

Court Appointed Special Advocates believes every abused or neglected child deserves to have a dedicated advocate speaking up for their best interests in court, at school, and in our community. Non-profit CASA trains and supervises community volunteers who ensure each child's needs remain a priority in an overburdened child welfare system. For these children, CASA means having a home instead of feeling lost, and being a priority instead of feeling invisible. This is another place to volunteer.

(Reason for the Season continues on page 6.)

(Reason for the Season continued from page 5.)

Other ministries that our church supports can also be chosen: This Child Here (Ukraine); WACT, and Shanti Nepal; Juna Amagara (Uganda); Q Mt.(Lesotho); Mulanje Hospital (Malawi); Ihanktonwan Learning Camp (SD); Union Rescue Mission; Family Crisis Resource Center; NAILS; Western Maryland Food Bank; Salvation Army; Allegany Health Right; Allegany Law; United Campus Ministries; and the monthly Outreach Dinner

REASON FOR THE SEASON GIVING FORM - 2019

NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

Please make your total amount payable to "First Presbyterian Church", and marked "Reason for the Season".

Presbyterian Education Board (PEB), scholarships, Pakistan \$ _____

Hurricane Dorian Disaster Relief, PDA _____

The Fuller Center for Housing _____

Pressley Ridge _____

Interfaith Pantry _____

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) _____

OTHER: _____

(Special Ministries, Nepal, "This Child Here", SD Learning Camp, Food Pantry, etc. . . .)

TOTAL: \$ _____

A THANK YOU FROM PRESSLEY RIDGE

Dear friends at First Presbyterian Church –

Thank you so much for the wonderful Baby Shower for our Homebuilder’s families! We seriously are overwhelmed by your thoughtfulness and generosity. The added touch of games and cake were an additional unexpected joy! Thank you for your support and care! -Mary Beth DeMartino

We are so very grateful for everything you have done for us! Even more importantly, the families we work with are very thankful and benefit greatly every day! -Wendy McKenzie

Thank you all so much for everything you’ve done for our families! We appreciate it so much! Thanks for your thoughtfulness and continued support! -Vanessa Phelps

Thank you for all of the baby items! Three families I work with have already benefitted. -Amy Crowley

We collected \$233 from the free will offering and are able to purchase two car seats for Pressley Ridge.



CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

Supporting Past, Present, and Future Leaders

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families.

Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years.

- \$1.1 million in gifts from 2017 are being used to provide critical financial support and grants for current and retired Presbyterian church workers in their times of need.
- 26 countries have been represented in the last 25 years at Presbyterian Pan American School.
- 98% of graduates from Menaul School go on to college.
- 84% of faculty at Stillman College hold terminal degrees.

December 22, 2019 is the day set aside for our congregation to contribute to this worthwhile offering. Please consider giving generously. IF WE ALL DO A LITTLE, IT ADDS UP TO A LOT!

JOIN US FOR A CONCERT OF MUSIC FOR A WINTER'S EVE!



Sunday, December 8th
at 3:00 PM
First Presbyterian
Church

Please join violinist, Wesley Mason and Director of Music Ministries, Bryan Lohr, in a special seasonal concert on Sunday, December 8th at 3:00 PM in the sanctuary. The program will be filled with the magic of winter: blistering winds, dancing snowflakes, crackling fires, and warm hearts. From the wild winds in Vivaldi's "L'Inverno" to the rejoicing spirit in Bloch's "Baal Shem", this concert is sure to light a candle of hope and put a song in your heart this holiday season. The program will last about one hour, followed by a light holiday reception in The Gathering Place. All are welcome!

A NOTE FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES

Dear Friends,

Once again the seasons of Advent and Christmas are upon us, promising a time of hope, peace, joy, and love as we await and celebrate the birth of Jesus. Throughout the four Sundays of Advent, the Sanctuary Choir and JoyBells will be sharing special music, both familiar and new, to help us observe and celebrate this special time of the church year.

To highlight a few of the special musical happenings this month at FPC:

- On **Sunday December 8**, the Sanctuary Choir will joined in worship by violinist Wesley Mason to offer two anthems in contrasting styles, showcasing Wesley's diverse talents. Then at 3:00 pm that afternoon, Wesley will present a concert in the sanctuary featuring music of Vivaldi, Tchaikovsky, Bloch, Holst, and others. Following the concert, free-will donations will be accepted to aid Wesley as he seeks to purchase a new violin. I am honored and excited to be accompanying Wesley in this recital, on both the piano and organ, and hope you will be able to attend!
- On **Wednesday, December 18**, during the **Longest Night service** held in the sanctuary at 7:00 pm, the choir will be sharing two beautifully reflective anthems-*The Yearning* and *Rose Of Sharon*-by living American composers Craig Courtney and Lloyd Larson.
- On **December 22**, music in worship will be led by the JoyBells and the West Virginia Brass Quintet, a seasonal favorite at FPC!
- The **7:45 PM Christmas Eve service** will feature the Sanctuary Choir singing John Rutter's *The Star Carol* and a stunning arrangement of the carol *Some Children See Him* by 20th century American Jazz musician Alfred Burt. The service will also feature other instrumental and vocal solos from some of the many gifted musicians here at FPC.

Wishing you a Blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas,

Bryan Lohr

Christmas Poinsettias 2019

If you wish to dedicate a Christmas poinsettia, please complete the tear-off sheet below and place it in the offering plate, or return it to the church office **by Sunday, December 15th**.

Poinsettias will be in the sanctuary for the 7:45 PM Christmas Eve service. If you would like to take home your poinsettia, please do so after the service. If you do not wish to keep your poinsettia, please indicate below. Additional donations may also be made toward the Christmas flowers.

Please print names exactly as you wish them to appear in the bulletin and attach a check for \$6.00 for each poinsettia, marked "CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA".

Number of poinsettias: _____ at \$6.00 each **Total \$** _____

I will pick up my poinsettia: _____ I wish to donate my poinsettia: _____

Additional Contribution for Christmas flowers: \$ _____ **Total \$** _____

To the Glory of God in **Memory** or **Honor** (Please circle one) of: _____

By: _____

Please return your order no later than December 15th.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC OFFERING 2019

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

TOTAL GIFT: \$ _____

To the Glory of God in **Memory** or **Honor** of: (Please circle one)

If you wish to dedicate Christmas Music in honor or memory of a loved one, please complete the tear-off sheet and place it in the offering plate, or return it to the church office.

Please print all the names exactly as you would like them to appear in the bulletin and attach a check designated "Christmas Music 2019" in the memo line. Proceeds from the Christmas Music Offering will be used to help defray the costs of seasonal guest musicians. **Please submit offering and dedication no later than Sunday, December 15th.**

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS AT FPC

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2019

5:30 PM - INTERGENERATIONAL ADVENT EVENT & HANGING OF THE GREENS



Join us in Fellowship Hall for evening of food and Christmas cheer at an intergenerational gathering designed to prepare us for the birth of Christ. During dinner we will have conversations about our Christmas memories and favorite parts of the Christmas season. We will then choose an activity to help celebrate the season with others; either "hang the greens," decorate cookies or prepare FSU cram packs. Afterwards, if you'd like, we will go caroling to the Kensington and beyond.

FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY CRAM PACKS: Our congregation will participate in the Cram pack outreach program again this year. The program is designed to help the college students at Frostburg State University get through their exam week with some encouragement. We need your help collecting items to fill the packs and preparing the packs **during the Intergenerational Advent & Hanging of the Greens Event**. You can bring any of the following donations in: a bag of nuts, pretzels, fruit, snacks, cookies, brownies, pencils, and energy bars. Please place all donations in the boxes by the parlor.



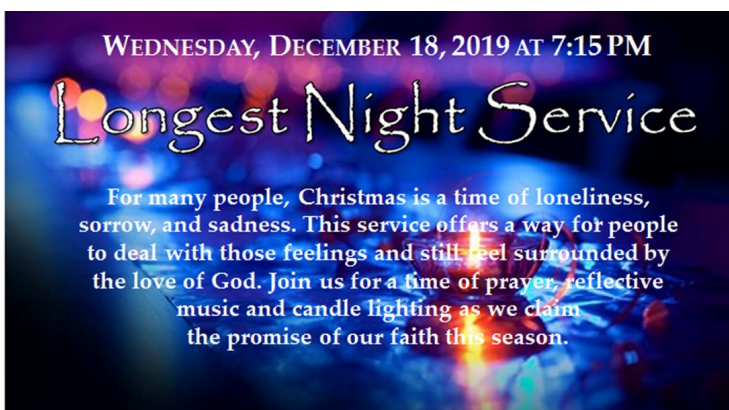
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2019: SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

11:00 AM - SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY: Worship will feature special music of the season from the Sanctuary Choir and violinist, Wesley Mason.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2019: THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

11:00 AM - SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2019



7:15 PM - LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE: The service will feature special, reflective holiday anthems, led by Bryan Lohr and the Sanctuary Choir. Join us for a time of prayer, reflective music and candle lighting as we claim the promise of our faith this season.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2019: FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

11:00 AM - SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY: The congregation will worship surrounded by the sounds of the season, shared by First Presbyterians' own JoyBells and special guests, The West Virginia Brass Quintet.

Christmas Joy Offering Collection!

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2019: CHRISTMAS EVE



7:45 PM & 11:00 PM - SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT: We will celebrate the birth of Christ with a traditional Christmas Eve service that includes communion, candle lighting and Christmas music. The service will feature special music from the Sanctuary Choir; Brenda Luger, flute; and other First Presbyterian musicians.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS



**Cumberland Choral Society
Christmas Concert
Sunday, December 15th
at 3:00 PM
First Presbyterian Church**



**Cumberland Music & Arts
Christmas Concert
Tuesday, December 17th
at 6:30 PM
First Presbyterian Church**

First Presbyterian Church
Eleven Washington Street
Cumberland, Maryland 21502

We Thank God For:

December

Address Service Requested



Like us on Facebook!

<http://www.facebook.com/First.Pres.Cumberland>



★
FOR
FOR
unto us a
Child^{is} born,
unto us a Son
is given; and the government
will be upon His shoulder. And
His name will be called
Wonderful
MIGHTY COUNSELOR,
Everlasting Father
PRINCE OF PEACE
PRINCE OF PEACE
ISAIAH
9:6