

December 2022



First Presbyterian Church E-News

Connect with First Presbyterian Church

A Note from the Pastor

Advent has begun and our family is slowly coming into town!

We are excited to be taking a closer look at God's Chosen Family: A Place in the Story this season. We know God placed people in the story to help us get a clearer picture of love. As we explore the lives of Jesus' family, we will see the ways our lives reflect love.

Learn from Naomi and Ruth (Dedication), Elizabeth (Recognition), Mary and Martha (Friendship), and Mary Mother of Jesus (Love)! After Christ arrives on Christmas Eve, we will take a closer look at the Shepherds, Joseph, the Magi, and John the Baptist.

Let's celebrate this great family of faith together during Advent and Christmastide. We all belong! See you soon!

Peace and Joy,
Pastor Alison



A Note from the Clerk of Session

Below you will find a portion of the lyrics of Thankful which was beautifully sung by Mikayla Dodge on Sunday, November 20th.

*“Somedays, we forget to look around us
Somedays, we can’t see the joy that surrounds us
So caught up inside ourselves
We take when we should give
So for tonight we pray for
What we know can be
And on this day we hope for
What we still can’t see
It’s up to us, to be the change
And even though we all can still do more
There’s so much to be thankful for
Look beyond ourselves”*

-Song writers: Carole Bayer Sager/David W. Foster/ Richard James Page

[Click here to view the November 20th Sunday service.](#)

Accompanied by our DMM Judie Brown, listen to Mikayla sing beginning at the 20:15 point in the service. The whole service is worth listening to for a sermon by elder Josh Gilhart, great hymns, thoughtful prayers and the anthem sung by the choir.

Things we’ve been thankful for at church this month:

- for the timely response of heating repair professionals who put in a new heat pump, electrical contractors to wire things correctly and plumbers to clean out backed up sewer drains and the resources to pay for emergency repairs from the Wills and Memorials funds.
- for generous and supportive pledges in response to our 2023 Stewardship Campaign. Keep those pledge cards coming in!
- for advent devotionals for home use and opportunities for faith and fun together

See the flyers and respond to the RSVP’s

- for competent, hard-working, and dedicated employees
- generosity to our mission partners and outreach commitments
- helping hands in hospitality on First Sundays and out in the community
- creative worship service planning for advent, longest night, Christmas Eve and Christmas day

With a grateful heart,

Carolyn Mathews, Clerk of Session



Thank you for your faithful support of the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church during 2022. Remember that year-end contributions must be received by the church no later than Thursday, December 29th in order to qualify as 2022 contributions for tax purposes.



Friday, December 23, 2022- CLOSED

Monday, December 26, 2022- CLOSED
Tuesday, December 27, 2022- Brittany Remote
Wednesday, December 28, 2022- Office open for the day
Thursday, December 29, 2022- Office open until Noon
Friday, December 30, 2022- CLOSED
Monday, January 2, 2022- CLOSED

Stewardship Campaign 2023



If you have not had a chance to fill out 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 2023 mission and ministry by making your pledge for the new year. Thank you!

[Click here to submit your 2023 pledge online!](#)

Nurture

Joys and Concern



Thara Bonebreak 4-Dec
George Campbell 7-Dec
Jane Williams 7-Dec
Robin Bissell 26-Dec
Jan Layman 28-Dec

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
Bridget Forbes 23-Jan

Happy 103rd Birthday to Thara Bonebreak! Thara will celebrate her 103rd birthday on Sunday, December 4th!

Please use the address below, if you would like to send Thara a card to help her celebrate her birthday:

Thara Bonebreak
Windsor Point Apt 312A,
1221 Broadstreet
Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526



SYMPATHY & PRAYERS to the family of former member, Shirley Giarritta, on her death on Tuesday, November 22nd. A memorial service will be held at First Presbyterian Church in the sanctuary on Saturday, December 17th at 3:00 PM.

Learn and Grow

The season of Advent calls us into a time of quiet waiting and reflection. However; it is challenged by the hustle and bustle of Christmas. Coming off a busy day off cooking we go straight into the commercial holiday of Black Friday and begin the race to Christmas. While December can be a busy month for all of us, the Faith Formation committee invites you to set aside some time to slow down and reflect on the season.

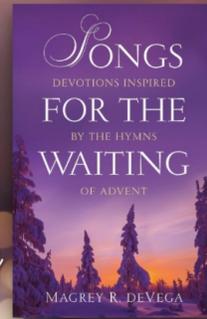


This Advent, Pastor Alison will be introducing us to many of God's chosen family. I like the word *Chosen* in this year's theme. It reminds me that family is not just about biological ties. Family is something we're born into, but, more significantly, it is also something we choose. It is the friends we make along the way. The relationships we nurture, the partners we meet and forge new families with, the people we choose to grow closer to through everyday acts of love. As Stitch said in the Disney movie *Lilo and Stitch* "This is my family. I found it all on my own. It's little, and broken, but still good. Yeah. Still good." Family is generally a little broken, but still good.

Advent Devotional

Through the words of moving Advent hymns and the powerful words of Scripture, Songs for the Waiting will help readers reclaim a sense of the beautiful anticipation and preparation that is central to Advent.

*Request Your Copy
Today!*



We invite you to take time this season to reflect on the comforts of chosen family. For daily devotional reading we have provided the book *Songs for the Waiting*. It is not about shopping, partying, gift wrapping, and vacationing. It is about resting, trusting, praying, and seeking. Through the words of moving Advent hymns and the powerful words of Scripture, *Songs for the Waiting* will help readers reclaim a sense of the beautiful anticipation and preparation that is central to Advent. Copies are still available and can be picked up at the church. Also available is the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren and the Presbyterian Church USA's annual booklet of bilingual Advent meditations entitled *Dreaming of a New World*. [Click here to view this devotional.](#)



My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden: For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed."

No earthly figure had a stronger familial relationship to Jesus than his mother, Mary. However, Mary often gets pushed aside and overlooked. In a three-week Sunday School class, we will aim to bring Mary back into the Advent narrative. Join us Sunday mornings at 10:00 AM in the Dakota room

as we explore three basic questions: who is Mary? How does Mary's story intersect with contemporary life? And what does Mary teach us about God?



Join us for our
Advent Event
Thursday, December 8th
5:00-7:00 PM
Fellowship Hall

**Enjoy an evening of
faith, fun and fellowship!**

RSVP to the church office if you plan to attend.

Lastly, join us on Thursday, December 8th at 5:00 PM for a fun time of faith and fellowship. Bring your friends and family to enjoy a delicious dinner and test your knowledge with a fun game of Christmas trivia.

Join in with songs together and go caroling with others. Children can help decorate Christmas cookies and dance to fun music. Help us fill gift bags for the Kensington residents and make Christmas ornaments. Get your Christmas cards ready with our Christmas selfie backdrop.

Please RSVP to the church office [or click here to sign up online](#), if you plan to attend.

We hope you will find some time in this busy season to participate in some or all of these offerings.

Opportunities to Serve



CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
CHURCH LEADERS—PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

BECAUSE CHRIST IS GIVEN, WE GIVE

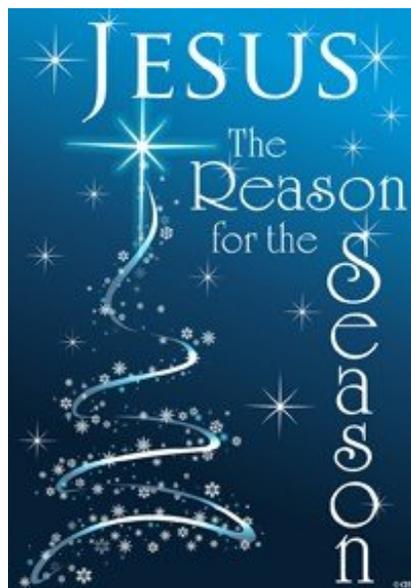


CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING: On **December 18th**, our congregation will give to the Christmas Joy Offering. This has been a Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s.

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.

Funded by gifts, legacies, endowment income, and half the Christmas Joy Offering, the Assistance Program provides critical financial assistance to eligible church workers and their families with urgent financial needs, as well as income and housing supplements for retired church workers and their families. It also sponsors grants for vocational training of clergy. Supporting our clergy and other career church workers in their retirement years provides them a needed benefit and is one way we can give thanks for their devotion to the church.

Please consider giving generously to this special offering.



Reason for the Season

November's newsletter had a sneak peek at the missions that are being highlighted this Christmas. The challenge was to identify the missions using related scriptures as clues. Did you take the challenge? It's time to reveal the "presents" and the recipients!

1. *"He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing." (Deuteronomy 10:18)*

A: **"This Child Here"**, begun by Robert Gamble, is providing basic supplies and a sense of normalcy to Ukrainian refugees who have left family and possessions behind.

2. *"... I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. . . For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:10-11)*

A: **Kinnard Academy** in Lahore, Pakistan, under Veda Gill's leadership, has grown from desks and lessons under trees, to 600 students overflowing the beautiful school we helped build in 2006. They now need additional classrooms.

3. *"Generously offer food to the hungry and meet the needs of the person in trouble. . ."* (Isaiah 58:10)

A: **The Community Café, Cumberland**, will be where everyone can eat with dignity in a restaurant environment, paying what they can afford. Top on the list of needs is start-up funds.

4. *"An intelligent mind acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge." (Proverbs 18:15)*

A: **Qholaqhoe Mountain Connections's** founder, Lynn Minderman, asks that we help provide a college scholarship to Thabang Coza, a promising high school graduate in Lesotho, Africa.

5. *"A husband must love his wife and not abuse her. (Colossians 3:19) "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4)*

A: **Family Crisis Resource Center, Cumberland**, offers emergency shelter, food, clothing, and counseling to those escaping abusive relationships.

6. *"The righteous will then answer him, 'When, Lord, did we ever see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink?'" (Matthew 25:37)*

A: **Western Maryland Food Bank, Cumberland**, provides food for those with empty cupboards, so they need to keep their own shelves filled.

7. *"Train children in the way they should go; when they grow old, they won't depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)*

A: **Presbyterian Education Board, Pakistan**, provides a quality education to Christian and Muslim children, which Veda Gill believes will improve life

in Pakistan.

8. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16)

A: ALL OF US!

Our church supports several other missions as well. You may want to donate to **Mulanji Hospital, Malawi; Dakota Learning Camp, SD; Nepali orphanage; Interfaith Food Pantry;** etc. Fill in the bulletin insert, or write your choice(s) on a slip of paper and put in the offering plate or give to Brittany in the church office. Checks should be made out to "First Presbyterian Church", earmarked "Reason for the Season".

REASON FOR THE SEASON 2022

Name : _____ Phone: _____

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

Presbyterian Ed. Bd. (Pakistan)-scholarships \$ _____

Kinnard Academy (Pakistan)- classroom extension \$ _____

"This Child Here" (Ukraine)- refugee supplies \$ _____

Q Mountain (Lesotho) – college scholarship \$ _____

Family Crisis Resource Center (Cumberland) \$ _____

Western MD Food Bank (Cumberland) \$ _____

Community Cafe –(Cumberland) \$ _____

OTHER _____ \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Worship With Us

Christmas Poinsettias 2022

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 11th.

Poinsettias will be in the sanctuary for the 7:30PM Christmas Eve service. If you would like to take your poinsettia home, 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 \$7.00 for each poinsettia, marked "CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA".

-

Number of poinsettias: _____ at \$7.00 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 11th.

Christmas Music 2022

NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

TOTAL GIFT: \$ _____

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

Please print all the names exactly as you would like them to appear in the bulletin and attach a check designated "Christmas Music 2022" 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 18th.

You're invited to
First Presbyterian Church
for our
Organ Dedication
Service
Sunday, December 18th



Join us on Sunday, December 18th as we celebrate the dedication of our organ during worship! First Presbyterian not only has a new updated organ console but also some enhanced organ stops to add to its majestic sound. Our King of Instruments is not only used as a solo instrument but also as one that is an ensemble instrument with choral, vocal and instrumental groups. These ORGAN PLUS duties will all be highlighted during our worship service on the 18th as we dedicate our new organ console with extended special music. Advent selections will include: *In Dulci Jubilo* by J.S. Bach, *Toccata* by David Hegarty, 2 movements from "*Magnificat*" by Taylor Scott Davis, *Fantasia on "Greensleaves"* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, *O Come O Come Emmanuel* Arr. by L. Stirling.

A cookie and punch reception will be held in The Gathering Place following worship.

Special thanks and appreciation for the generous support to the Belt family and the congregation of First Presbyterian Church which made the purchase of the new console possible!

Advent & Christmas at First Presbyterian Church

Wednesday, November 30, 2022
Hanging of the Greens at 4:30 PM



Join us **this evening** for our Hanging of the Greens event. We will begin the evening at **4:30 PM** with pizza followed by the decorating of the church. Join us for an evening of Christmas cheer at our intergenerational gathering designed to prepare us for the birth of Christ.

Sunday, December 4th: Second Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 11th: Third Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 18th: Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 18th
Mountainside Baroque: Service of Lessons & Carols

Join Mountainside Baroque for a Service of Lessons & Carol on Sunday, December 18th at 5:00 PM at Emmanuel Episcopal.

Wednesday, December 21, 2022
Longest Night Service 5:30 PM

For many people, Christmas is a time of loneliness, sorrow, and sadness. This service offers a way for people to deal with those feelings and still feel surrounded by the love of God. Join us on Wednesday December 21 at 5:30

PM for a time of prayer, reflective music and candle lighting as we claim the promise of our faith this season.

Friday, December 24, 2022
Christmas Eve Service 7:30 PM



Join us at 7:30 PM for a Christmas Prelude followed by our Christmas Eve Service beginning at 8:00 PM! We will join together to celebrate the birth of Christ with a traditional Christmas Eve service that includes communion, candle lighting and Christmas music.

Upcoming Community Events



CUMBERLAND CHORAL SOCIETY

GRATITUDE

&

JOY

HOLIDAY CONCERT

WITH FAMILY SING-ALONG

DECEMBER 3, 2022 AT 7:30PM

DECEMBER 4, 2022 AT 4:00 PM

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

11 Washington Street, Cumberland, MD 21502

Regular Admission	\$20
Senior Citizens	\$15
Students 10+	\$5
Children 10 and Under	FREE



Merry Christmas

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth
peace, good will toward men.

LUKE 2:14 KJV

