

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
11 WASHINGTON STREET CUMBERLAND, MD 21502



SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY: THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

AN ACTIVE ADVENT: AMONG
DECEMBER 17, 2023 11:00 AM

OPENING VOLUNTARY

LO, HOW A ROSE E'ER BLOOMING
JUDITH BROWN, ORGAN

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

11:00 AM

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

GARY AND DEB HENDRICKSON

INTROIT

LO, HE COMES WITH CLOUDS DESCENDING
THE SANCTUARY CHOIR

"HELMSLEY"

Lo, He comes with clouds descending,
Once for our salvation slain;

Thousand, thousand saints attending join to sing the glad refrain:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Christ the Lord returns to reign

* CALL TO WORSHIP & PRAYER FOR THE DAY

The Advent season is a time for us to focus our attention

We look for ways we can help in the world around us.

The Advent season is a time for us to focus our faith

We worship to experience God in our midst.

The Advent season is a time for us to pay attention

We will stay Alert to what God is doing.

The Advent season is a time for progress

We keep things moving Ahead.

The Advent season is a time for connection

We remember that we are Among each other.

Let us pray -

Holy One, you have promised us that the day of our salvation is near. Keep us faithful in love and watchful in prayer, so that we may stand with confidence and joy at the coming of Christ, our redeemer and Lord. Amen.

* HYMN #104

O LORD, HOW SHALL I MEET YOU

"VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN"

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, have mercy on us. We are not ready for your coming. We live in sin, as though there was no justice. We live in fear, as though there was no grace. Forgive us, Lord. Show us your mercy and steadfast love. Lead us to your truth, and teach us your paths, for you are the God of our salvation. Amen.

(Silence for personal prayer and reflection.)

O come, thou Wisdom from on high, who orderest all things mightily: to us the path of knowledge show;
and teach us in her ways to go. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PASSING OF THE PEACE AND CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY

Please stand and greet those in the pews near you. Send a wave to the camera for those joining online.

We recognize how important we are to each other; we belong to each other and are stronger together.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING

ISAIAH 61:1-4, 8-11

⁶¹ The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners,
² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,
³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. ⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

⁸ For I, the LORD, love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹ Their descendants shall be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my whole being shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its shoots and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

ANTHEM

E'EN SO, LORD JESUS QUICKLY COME

PAUL MANZ

THE SANCTUARY CHOIR

Peace be to you and grace from him
Who freed us from our sins,
Who loved us all and shed his blood
That we might saved be.
Sing holy, holy to our Lord,
The Lord, Almighty God,
Who was and is and is to come;
Sing holy, holy, Lord!
Rejoice in heaven, all ye that dwell therein,
Rejoice on earth, ye saints below,
For Christ is coming, is coming soon,
For Christ is coming soon!
E'en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come,
And night shall be no more;
They need no light nor lamp nor sun,
For Christ will be their All!

SCRIPTURE READING

I THESSALONIANS 5:16-24

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²² abstain from every form of evil. ²³ May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

SERMON

"AN ACTIVE ADVENT: AMONG"

REV. ALISON PETERS

* HYMN #102

SAVIOR OF THE NATIONS, COME

"NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND"

INVITATION TO OFFERING

(Please place all tithes and offerings as well as any orange prayer request cards in the offering plate.)

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

CAROL

DONNA GARTMAN SCHULTZ

KATIE HENDRIX, MIKAYLA DODGE, SOPRANOS; ZACH DODGE, BARITONE; & JUDITH BROWN, ORGAN

Flocks feed by darkness with a noise of whispers,
 In the dry grass of pastures
 And lull the solemn night with their weak bells.
 The little towns upon the rocky hills
 Look down as meek as children:
 Because they have seen come this holy time.
 God's glory, now is kindled gentler than low candlelight
 Under the rafters of a barn.
 Eternal peace is sleeping in the hay
 And wisdom's born in secret in a small-roofed stable.
 And, O! make holy music in the stars, you happy angels!
 You shepherds gather on the hill.
 Look up you timid flocks where the three kings are coming through the wintry trees.
 While we, unnumbered children of the wicked centuries
 Come after with our penances and prayers.
 And lay them down in the sweet-smelling hay besides the wisemen's golden jars.

-Thomas Merton

* DOXOLOGY #88

O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL (Verse 7)

"VENI EMMANUEL"

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind; bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
 fill the whole world with heaven's peace. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE CONCLUDING WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

* HYMN #115

AWAY IN A MANGER

"MUELLER"

* BENEDICTION

* RESPONSE AFTER BENEDICTION #105

PEOPLE, LOOK EAST (Verse 1)

"BESANCON"

People look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year:
 Make your house fair as you are able; trim the hearth and set the table
 People look east and sing today: Love, the Guest, is on the way.

POSTLUDE

NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND (COME, NOW SAVIOUR, OF OUR RACE)
 JUDITH BROWN, ORGAN

ANDREAS NIKOLAUS VETTER

* When this symbol precedes an element of the service, if you are able, please stand.
 Please join in reading or singing those parts of the service printed in **bold**.

This Morning's Worship Leaders

Preacher Rev. Alison Peters
 Liturgist.....Cindy & Elena Corley
 Advent Candlelighters.....Gary & Deb Hendrickson
 Director of Music Ministries/Organist.....Judith Brown
 Musicians.....The Sanctuary Choir; Mikayla Dodge & Katie Hendrix, Sopranos; & Zach Dodge, Baritone
 Audio/Video Technicians.....Joe Aurigemma and Eric Ringler
 Nursery Care Workers.....Jeff & Kathy Getty
 Ushers.....David Stickler & Mike Levitas



WELCOME: A very warm welcome to everyone who comes to worship with us here at First Presbyterian Church! We are proud of being a “Big Tent Church” where everyone is welcome to join us in worshiping and serving our Lord, Jesus Christ. We welcome and encourage worshipers of all races, all women, men, and members of the LGBTQ+ community, all political parties, and all walks of life to join us. We welcome you to worship with us.

WELCOME VISITORS: We are glad you found your way to First Presbyterian Church of Cumberland. For more information about opportunities to worship, learn and serve with us, we encourage you to visit the table outside the church office. You can also learn more about us at www.fpc-cumberland.org and www.facebook.com/First.Pres.Cumberland.

FRIENDSHIP PADS: Please locate and sign the red pad in your pew, tear off the sheet and place it in the collection plate during the offering. This important practice allows us to be mindful of new folks and long-time members as well, and is a good way to learn (or remember) the names of those with whom you are seated. **If you are visitor, please fill out the “Welcome to First Presbyterian Church” card in the pew rack and put it in the offering plate when it comes by during the service.**

PERSONAL LISTENING DEVICES: (amplifiers) are available in the back of the church for use during worship. Please see an usher for assistance.

SHARING OF JOYS & CONCERNS: Please use the orange prayer request cards in the back of the sanctuary by the bulletins to share any joys and concerns. Place the card in the offering plate once you have completed your request. The ushers will bring them to the pastor during the offering. The orange prayer request cards are also available in the pew racks.



CHILDREN IN WORSHIP: You are welcome to bring your child with you to worship. We have "worship bags" in the back of the sanctuary that include materials for drawing and coloring, as well as Bible stories and Bible word-find games. Our "To Families with Young Children" pew card contains information about why young children should be encouraged to come to worship and how parents and others can engage them more fully in worship. **Nursery care is provided during worship for all children 4 years of age and younger!**

THE PRAY-GROUND is a special space in the sanctuary for our youngest children and their families. All families are welcome to come and sit in the right front pews with their children seated on the rug. This front row seat will allow God's youngest children to participate in the service in a place where they can see and hear best. There will be activities provided so that their little hands are kept busy while participating in worship. “Jesus said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it’” (Mark 10:14-15).

SANCTUARY FLOWERS: Please contact Michael Levitas or the church office if you would like to sponsor flowers for a special occasion like a birthday or anniversary or in memory or honor of a friend or loved one. You may specify live or silk flowers.

CHRISTMAS & ADVENT AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE: 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 Thursday, December 21st at 6:00 PM for a time of prayer, reflective music and candle lighting as we claim the promise of our faith this season.**

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING: On December 24th, our congregation will have the opportunity to contribute 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**. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. Please consider donating to this Special Offering.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT & COMMUNION SERVICE: **Join us at 7:30 PM for a Christmas Prelude followed by our Christmas Eve Service at 8:00 PM. Join us as we celebrate the birth of Christ with a traditional Christmas Eve service that includes communion, candle lighting and Christmas music.**



MONDAY, DECEMBER (18)

8:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN

TUESDAY, DECEMBER (19)

8:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER (20)

8:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN

12:00 PM STAFF LUNCHEON

7:00 PM NA MEETING

THURSDAY, DECEMBER (21)

8:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN

6:00 PM LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER (22)

8:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN UNTIL NOON

SATURDAY, DECEMBER (23)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER (24)

9:45 AM ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

11:00 AM SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

7:30 PM CHRISTMAS EVE MUSICAL PRELUDE

8:00 PM CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE:

CANDLELIGHT & COMMUNION



Friday, December 22, 2023- Office open until Noon

Monday, December 25, 2023- CLOSED

Tuesday, December 26, 2023- CLOSED

Wednesday, December 27, 2023- Office open until Noon

Thursday, December 28, 2023- Office open until Noon

Friday, December 29, 2023- CLOSED

Monday, January 1, 2023- CLOSED

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

RULING ELDERS: CARL BELT & CINDY CORLEY



ANNUAL GIVING YEAR-TO-DATE:	as of December 10, 2023
Total 2023 Pledges Promised	\$219,970.00
Pre-paid pledges	\$ 13,282.00
<u>2023 Pledge Balance Promised</u>	<u>\$206,688.00</u>
Pledge Balance Received Year-to-Date	\$200,271.00
Pledge Balance Promised Year-to-Date	\$194,981.00
Over/(Under)	\$ 5,289.00

YEAR END GIVING: Thank you for your faithful support of the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church during 2023. Remember that year-end contributions must be received by the church no later than Friday, December 29th in order to qualify as 2023 contributions for tax purposes.



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 2023" 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 today.**

REASON FOR THE SEASON



Light! One of the key necessities for good growth in plants.

That seems to be the theme for this year's Reason for the Season. . .light and growth.

What better theme to use for our Christmas extra-mile giving, celebrating the birth of the Light of the World!

Our Reason for the Season is a way of giving gifts to missions that our church has a close connection with, supporting locally and around the world. It can also be an alternative-giving opportunity in lieu of a material gift. Each one will be described more in the December newsletter, so you can decide which speak the most to your heart.

This year's projects are growing, thanks to light in many forms:

***PRESBYTERIAN EDUCATION BOARD OF PAKISTAN (PEB)** will celebrate 25 years of educating Pakistani children, both Christian and Muslim, in schools rebuilt after the government returned them. We are continuing scholarships for "our" seven students (and possibly more!) to give them, and ultimately Pakistan, a brighter future.

***LIVING HOPE FOR CHILDREN IN UGANDA (FORMERLY JUNA AMAGARA)** supplies children, many of whom are AIDS orphans, with the basic necessities of food, shelter, health, and love. We are continuing scholarships to high school and college students who will shine Christ's light to others. Several who entered school with scholarships when Rev. Ben started Juna Amagara have now graduated.

***GRAND 'ANSE IN HAITI** is providing much needed medical care and other basics where there is little. The total number of clinics is 20+ and patients treated as of 2022 was 3,435. Referrals have been made for end-stage breast cancer, pediatric orthopedic conditions, infected wounds, and other health problems. GAHDA is helping to grow the limited resources, including equipment.

***INTERFAITH FOOD PANTRY IN CUMBERLAND** stocks its shelves to feed local people who are experiencing an emergency need for food. It serves everyone from low-income families, single parents, senior citizens, unemployed individuals, disabled veterans, working poor, etc. A referral from a church or social service organization is needed. Volunteers are always welcome.

***PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE IN MAUI, HAWAII** is helping in the restoration after the deadly fires this past summer. Funds are needed for urgent immediate care but also for the development of long-term projects and assistance, to bring healing from both the physical and emotional long-lasting effects. Years of recovery lie ahead.

***POSSIBILITY SHOP** in Cumberland gives a hand-up of simple essentials. It provides 13 organizations with space to offer 21 programs, among them the Allegany County Health Dept., Horizon Goodwill, HRDC, MD Coalition of Families, MD Wellness, and W. MD Food Bank. Services range from clothing, hygiene supplies, outdoor gear, phones, food, help getting a driver's license, etc.

***SOLIGHT IS A SOLAR LIGHTS COMPANY** with a project to supply light when the power goes off due to war or other extreme emergencies. Donations can be designated to several areas. Ours will go to Ukraine. The small solar lanterns are collapsible, easily carried, and not reliant on the power grid. Children especially are calmed by the light, traumatized from sheltering in darkness.

Any of the other missions our church supports may be donated to also, such as Special Ministries, Union Rescue Mission, "This Child Here", Shanti Nepal, etc.

Please prayerfully consider giving this year to what you feel a strong connection to.

REASON FOR THE SEASON GIVING FORM - 2023

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

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

*PRESBYTERIAN EDUCATION BOARD OF PAKISTAN (PEB) \$ _____

*LIVING HOPE FOR CHILDREN (FORMERLY JUNA AMAGARA) _____

*GRAND 'ANSE IN HAITI _____

*INTERFAITH FOOD PANTRY IN CUMBERLAND _____

*PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE IN MAUI, HAWAII _____

*POSSIBILITY SHOP _____

*SOLIGHT IS A SOLAR LIGHTS COMPANY(UKRAINE) _____

OTHER: _____

(Special Ministries, Nepal, "This Child Here", Union Rescue Mission, etc, . . .)

TOTAL: \$ _____

MISSION STATEMENT

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we worship God and promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ by loving ALL and fostering justice, peacemaking, and care of creation.

VISION STATEMENT

We aspire to be nurtured by the good news of God's love, where ALL God's children are:

- Welcomed and appreciated
- Called to worship, learn, and grow together in faith
- Encouraged to care for one another
- Sent to show God's love

SESSION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CLERK OF SESSION

Carolyn Mathews

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

Carl Belt & Cindy Corley

BUILDING & GROUNDS

Bob Courtney & Evan Swanger

CONGREGATIONAL CARE & OUTREACH

Mikayla Dodge & Linda Mellon

FAITH FORMATION

Josh Gilhart & Ann Kellermeyer

MISSION

Aaron Hendrickson & Brenda Luger

WORSHIP & MUSIC

Sharon Kazary & Mike Levitas

-Adopted by the Session on September 21, 2023

PASTOR'S SCHEDULE

Pastor Alison is available when requested or informed of a need. If you are aware of someone in need of a visit or phone call, please call or text her to let her know. *[Fridays are generally her day off and she will respond when she is available.]*

Ways to contact Pastor Alison: call, text, or email: 814-715-1681 / revalisonpeters@gmail.com

To help with scheduling,
please reach out to the Church Office:
301-777-3700/ firstpresbyteriansecretary@gmail.com