

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
11 WASHINGTON STREET CUMBERLAND, MD 21502



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

AN ACTIVE ADVENT: APPEAR

DECEMBER 24, 2023

11:00 AM

OPENING VOLUNTARY

AWAY IN A MANGER
JUDITH BROWN, PIANO

ARR. JACOB B. WEBER

11:00 AM

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

THE KELLERMEYER FAMILY

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN #144

IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER (VS. 1 & 4)

"CRANHAM"

* 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.

The Advent season is a time when things are revealed.

We know that Christ is ready to Appear.

Let us pray -

God our light and salvation, you bring hope and peace to the lowly and oppressed. Let us see the world through your eyes so that we may love your people, that we may work for justice, that our lives may bear witness to the truth of your word and your kingdom at hand. Come near that we may truly know your power and might. Amen.

* HYMN #82

COME, THOU LONG-EXPECTED JESUS

"HYFRYDOL"

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God our Savior, we ask for your mercy. Though we have heard Mary's song, we still seek security in pride and power and possessions. Though we know your story, we resist the costs of following you. We pass by those considered lowly in this world. We turn away from hungry people who still wait to be filled. Forgive us, we pray. Help us to work for the justice you intend. Make us messengers of the peace you bring. As we wait for you, turn our apathy into acts of love and service. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. Amen.

(Silence for personal prayer and reflection.)

RESPONSE #88

O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL (Verse 2)

“VENI EMMANUEL”

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 9:2-7

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied exultation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Great will be his authority, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

* HYMN # 117

WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED THEIR FLOCKS

“WINCHESTER OLD”

SCRIPTURE READING

LUKE 2:1-20

²In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room. ⁸Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” ¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, ¹⁹and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

SERMON

“AN ACTIVE ADVENT: APPEAR”

REV. ALISON PETERS

* HYMN # 110

LOVE HAS COME

“BRING A TORCH”

INVITATION TO OFFERING

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

OFFERTORY SOLO

COVENTRY CAROL
I WONDER AS I WANDER
NANCY HODGES, PIANO

ARR. LANI SMITH
C. E. WALZ

* 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 #122 SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT "STILLE NACHT"
Volunteer Handbell Choir directed by Julie Courtney

* 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 THE SNOW LAY ON THE GROUND "VENITE ADOREMUS"
JUDITH BROWN, PIANO

* 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.....Sharon Kazary
Advent Candlelighters..... The Kellermeyer Family
Director of Music Ministries/Pianist.....Judith Brown
Musician.....Nancy Hodges, Piano
Audio/Video Technicians.....Joe Aurigemma and Eric Ringler
Ushers.....David Stickler & Linda Mellon



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 worshipping 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

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING: Today, 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 this evening 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 (25)

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

TUESDAY, DECEMBER (26)

BRITTANY OUT OF OFFICE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER (27)

8:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN UNTIL NOON
7:00 PM NA MEETING

THURSDAY, DECEMBER (28)

8:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN UNTIL NOON

FRIDAY, DECEMBER (29)

BRITTANY OUT OF OFFICE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER (30)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER (31)

9:45 AM ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL
11:00 AM SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY



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, 2024- CLOSED

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE
RULING ELDERS: CARL BELT & CINDY CORLEY



ANNUAL GIVING YEAR-TO-DATE:	as of December 17, 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	\$203,271.00
Pledge Balance Promised Year-to-Date	\$198,881.00
Over/(Under)	\$ 4,809.00

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.

OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR 2024 are now available on the table in the back of the sanctuary. If you do not see a box with your name on it, please contact the church office.

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

-Adopted by the Session on September 21, 2023

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

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