

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
11 WASHINGTON STREET CUMBERLAND, MD 21502



Empowered to love, serve, care, and give

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY
JANUARY 12, 2025 11:00 AM

GATHERING

OPENING VOLUNTARY

HOW BRIGHTLY SHINES YON MORNING STAR
JUDITH BROWN, ORGAN

DIETRICH BUXTEHUDE

11:00 AM

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT

HO, ALL WHO THIRST
THE SANCTUARY CHOIR

"JACOB'S WELL"

Ho, all who thirst, come now to the water,
And all whose souls are parched and weary,
Come and drink!

Ho, all who thirst, come now to the water,
And from your heart will flow a never-failing spring!

Why forsake the Lord, the fount of living water,
Choosing broken cups that cannot be filled?

* CALL TO WORSHIP & PRAYER FOR THE DAY

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God;

The holy habitation of the Most High.

The Lord pours forth rivers from bare mountains, and fountains in valleys' depths.

God opens rocks, and water gushes out.

On dry thirsty land God springs forth streams in the desert.

Let the waters flow!

Let us pray -

Creator Spirit, who hovered over the waters at creation's birth, who descended in the form of a dove at Jesus' baptism, who was poured out under the signs of fire and wind at Pentecost: Come to us, open our hearts and minds, so that we may hear the Word of life and be renewed by your power. Amen.

* HYMN #688

SPIRIT OF GOD, DESCEND UPON MY HEART

"MORECAMBE"

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Sovereign God, in baptism you called us to turn from sin and turn to Jesus Christ; but we stray from his ways and do not heed your call. In baptism you joined us to Christ in his death that we might be raised with Christ in new life; but we cherish old ways and fail to embrace the risen life of righteousness, justice, and love. In baptism you called us to ministry to all, but we are hesitant to trust your will; we do not nurture the ways of peace; we allow animosity to grow among us, setting neighbor against neighbor and nation against nation. In baptism you gave us the Holy Spirit to teach and guide us but we rely on ourselves and refuse to trust your direction.

Lord, have mercy on us. Remember the promises you made to us in baptism, forgive our sinful ways and heal our brokenness. Set us free from all that enslaves us, and raise us to new life in Jesus Christ, that we may be your faithful servants, showing forth your healing love to the world, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

(Silence for personal prayer and reflection.)

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy on us.

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.

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST READING

PSALM 29

¹ Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

² Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name; worship the Lord in holy splendor.

³ The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over mighty waters.

⁴ The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

⁵ The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

⁶ He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and Sirion like a young wild ox.

⁷ The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

⁸ The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

⁹ The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl and strips the forest bare, and in his temple all say, "Glory!"

¹⁰ The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever.

¹¹ May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!

ANTHEM

THE STRONG AND GENTLE VOICE

"NEW RESTORATION"

THE SANCTUARY CHOIR

The strong and gentle voice, the swift descending Dove
And Jesus rising from the stream met joyfully in love.

The Three were found as one by Jordan's rugged shore
Where John the Baptist preached the way of justice for the poor.

And was the Dove content by Jordan to remain?
She guided Jesus on to know temptation, thirst, and pain.

He faced a threefold test that no one else could bear
The desert beasts remained with him and angels gave him care.

Baptismal waters dry, a moment's bliss will fade
But with the Dove to lead us on we need not be afraid.

SECOND READING

LUKE 3:15-17, 21-22

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

²¹ Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened,

²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

SERMON

"A BAPTIST'S PERSPECTIVE"

REV. ALISON PETERS

* HYMN #96

ON JORDAN'S BANK THE BAPTIST'S CRY

"WINCHESTER NEW"

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

INVITATION TO OFFERING

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

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER
THE SANCTUARY CHOIR

"GENEVAN 42"

I believe in God the Father, merciful and mighty Lord,
Maker of the earth and heavens, whom we worship and adore;
And in Jesus Christ the son, only Savior, sovereign one,
By the Holy Spirit given, born of Mary, blessed virgin.

Under Pilate, Jesus suffered, faithful to his final breath.
He was crucified and buried, and descended into death.
From the grave he did arise; he ascended through the skies;
Now enthroned with God in heaven, he will judge the dead and living.

I believe in God the Spirit, and the church in every place;
Saints in glorious communion, all forgiven, full of grace;
Flesh and blood will live again; life in Christ will never end.
Holy Spirit, Son and Father, I will praise your name forever.

* DOXOLOGY #608

PRAISE GOD, FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW

"PRAISE GOD (HOPSON)"

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all people here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore; praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE CONCLUDING WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER- Ecumenical Version

(You are welcome to pray the Lord's Prayer with the version most familiar to you.)

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 #480

TAKE ME TO THE WATER

"TAKE ME TO THE WATER"

* BENEDICTION

* RESPONSE AFTER BENEDICTION #306

BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS (Verse 1)

"DENNIS"

At FPC there is a tradition of joining hands while singing "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" to close our service.

You are welcome to do whatever feels comfortable during this time. There is no wrong way to participate in worship!

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.

POSTLUDE

FOUNDATION
JUDITH BROWN, ORGAN

* 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.....	Carl Belt
Director of Music Ministries/Organist/Pianist.....	Judith Brown
Musicians.....	The Sanctuary Choir
Audio/Video Technicians.....	Joe Aurigemma and Eric Ringler
Ushers.....	Michael and Cathy Levitas
Nursery.....	Chris and Kelsey Gallo

SECOND SUNDAY SOCIAL: Join us after worship for a variety of soup, bread, and fellowship!

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION-CORPORATION of First Presbyterian Church of Cumberland, Maryland is called by the Session for **Sunday, January 26, 2025.**

The purposes of the meeting are:

- To hear the Annual Report of the Session
- To elect an Auditor to the Auditing Committee
- To elect a new class of Ruling Elders
- To elect a 2025 Congregational Nominating Committee
- To receive the 2025 Budget
- To elect Officers of the Corporation
- To approve the pastor's terms of Call
- To conduct any other business properly coming before the Congregation-Corporation

-By Order of the Session



WELCOME: A very warm welcome to everyone who comes to worship with us here at First Presbyterian Church! We are proud to be 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, which are located in the back of the sanctuary by the bulletins to share any joys or 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 such as a birthday or anniversary or in memory or honor of a friend or loved one. You may specify live or silk flowers.

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: 814-715-
1681/revalisonpeters@gmail.com

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

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE RULING ELDERS: CARL BELT & CINDY CORLEY

ANNUAL GIVING YEAR-TO-DATE:	as of January 5, 2025
Total 2025 Pledges Promised	\$237,796.00
Pre-paid pledges	\$ 48,578.00
<u>2025 Pledge Balance Promised</u>	<u>\$189,217.00</u>
Pledge Balance Received Year-to-Date	\$ 5,278.00
Pledge Balance Promised Year-to-Date	\$ 3,638.00
Over/(Under)	\$ 1,639.00

OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR 2025 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.

ONLINE GIVING



MONDAY, JANUARY (13)

8:30 AM	CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
4:45 PM	ADMIN & FINANCE MEETING
7:00 PM	CHORAL SOCIETY REHEARSAL

TUESDAY, JANUARY (14)

8:30 AM	CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
11:00 AM	STAFF MEETING
5:00 PM	FAITH FORMATION MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY (15)

8:30 AM	CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
6:30 PM	JOYBELLS REHEARSAL
7:00 PM	NA MEETING

THURSDAY, JANUARY (16)

8:30 AM	CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
7:00 PM	SESSION MEETING

FRIDAY, JANUARY (17)

8:30 AM	CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
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SATURDAY, JANUARY (18)

SUNDAY, JANUARY (19)

11:00 AM	SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY
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SOUTH DAKOTA LEARNING CAMP SOUP SALE

DAKOTA SOUP SALE – It's once again time to order your delicious soup to support the summer mission trip to Marty, South Dakota. 2025 Camp Dates are July 26th-August 2nd - *consider joining our staff this year, more details to come!*

All proceeds will go directly into this year's trip supporting staff travel costs, camper food, and supplies to make a real difference for our Native friends. We hope you will consider ordering some soup!

SOUPS FOR SALE INCLUDE:

- Chicken Tortilla (GF, DF)
- White Chicken Chili (GF)
- Traditional Red Chili (GF, DF)
- Vegetarian Vegetable (V, GF, DF)
- Curried Butternut Squash (V, GF, DF) *(Community Cafe's Recipe!)*

Orders are due by February 2nd

Fill out the inserted order form and return it to the First Presbyterian Church office or email it to firstpresbyteriansecretary@gmail.com. Thank you for your support!

RULING ELDER BIOS

CARL “BUCK” BELT (CLASS OF 2028)

Buck has been a member of First Presbyterian Church since 1961. He graduated from VA Tech in 1968 where he met his wife, Jane, and they married in 1969. They have two daughters, Eleanor and husband, Dave Madden, parents of Quinn and Griffin; and Meredith and husband, Jeremy Irons, parents of Bryson and Brennan. Buck first served on session in the Class of 1979 and has served four terms since. He chaired or co-chaired our Stewardship Campaigns from 1981 thru 2017 in addition to heading several Capital Campaigns during that same period. Buck believes he has been blessed by God and is inspired to give back to the church through active participation in spiritual leadership on session.

JULIE COURTNEY (CLASS OF 2028)

In sharing some of the highlights of being a member of First Presbyterian Church, Cumberland for 45 years, Julie was reminded of how we are the body of Christ, and we all have different functions and purpose. She feels the call from God to become an Elder at this time after a journey giving her many opportunities to serve.

Julie attended West Bethesda Presbyterian Church from birth, and still feels part of that church family when visiting northwest Ohio. She was baptized as a confirmand in high school and was a Youth Advisory Delegate to the General Assembly in Denver, Colorado in 1973.

After marrying Bob and settling into their Fayette Street home in 1978, Julie and Bob returned to Bob's home church family here, where they joined the sanctuary choir and volunteered as Youth Fellowship advisors. Julie joined First Presbyterian in 1979 and participated in the PW Mary-Martha Circle.

Over the years Julie has taught both adult and youth Sunday School classes, gone on work camps with both youth and adults, worked with Youth Club, Face the Music camps, at funeral receptions, and VBS. She has been the director of the JoyBells Handbell choir since 1982, and helped with area Handbell Festivals.

Julie is currently a member of the Faith Formation Team and the Worship and Music Committee. She served as head of the search committee for the Director of Christian Music, which brought Judie Brown back to the organ bench (God is Good!) She has also served several terms on the Nominating Committee.

The Courtney's children stretch across the country with Jon and Meaghan Courtney near Seattle, WA; Josh and Ashley Courtney, and sons Rowan and Elias, in Norwalk, CT, and Melissa Courtney in Knoxville, TN. Julie also has a great love for her church family and appreciate the many ways that each of us minister to each other and our community. “Here I am, Lord... I will hold your people in my heart.”

MICHAEL LEVITAS (CLASS OF 2028)

Michael became a member of First Presbyterian Church in 1993, joining with his wife, Cathy and sons, Daniel and Matthew. Mike and the two boys were baptized that day. He is currently a co-moderator of the Worship and Music Committee along with Sharon Kazary. Mike has also served on Session in the past, and has been a long-time member of the Worship and Music Committee. Mike is a pediatrician and lives in LaVale with Cathy and his elderly mother. Their three boys are young adults living out of town. He looks forward to continuing to serve our congregation as a session member.

CAROLYN MATHEWS (CLASS OF 2028)

Carolyn is a lifelong Presbyterian who moved to this area from Ligonier, PA in 1979 and joined First Presbyterian Church in 1985. Over the years, she has been actively involved in many activities of our church including search committees for our music directors and our pastors. For many years she taught the middle school (6-8th grades) Sunday School class and led activities in the Wednesday afternoon Youth Club of the 1990s. Carolyn was ordained an elder in 2005 and has actively served on the Worship and Music Committee since then. She is a member of the choir and enjoys ringing a few Joy Bells. Currently serving as clerk of session, she has found the past two years to be an interesting learning experience about the Baltimore Presbytery as well as the nuts and bolts of church administration. Carolyn and her husband, Tom, an active and lifelong member of Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Parish, have three adult (married) children who live and work away from Cumberland. Carolyn and Tom enjoy travel and visiting with their children and nine grandchildren. Carolyn retired from

the Maryland Park Service in June 2013. Her 30-year career as a park ranger culminated with eight years as the manager of the Deep Creek Lake Recreation Area. Retirement has brought more time to bike, hike, bird, paddle, fish, read, relax, camp, travel and knit as well as continuing her involvement in exploring, appreciating and learning in God's great outdoors.

LINDA SMITH (CLASS OF 2025)

Linda was baptized a Methodist, confirmed a Lutheran, ordained and installed a Presbyterian, and might be buried as a . . . who-knows-what.

A job with the Allegany County Public Schools brought Linda from Greensburg, PA to Cumberland in 1976. She felt at home at First Presbyterian because the prayers and responses fit current events, and she liked Rev. Sorenson's sermons. Also, the members of the congregation were so welcoming.

Linda was invited to join Presbyterian Women and found it a great way to get to know women of different ages as the circle met for meals and programs, and visited other churches for PW Presbytery gatherings. She served as secretary, treasurer, and even leader. PW is also very mission oriented and that appealed to her.

Linda's first Elder assignment was on a Creative Arts Committee that decorated the large bulletin board that was in the foyer and hosted art exhibits. She was a "charter member" when the Global Mission Subcommittee began and has been active on the Mission Committee ever since, especially with "Reason for the Season."

Linda's interest in travel led her to join mission work trips to Czech Republic in the 1990s, and FPC now has a church partner in Vsetín. Georgene McKenzie and Linda had the honor of representing our church at the dedication of PEB's Kinnaird Academy in Pakistan in 2006.

Linda served as the church librarian for years. She is the church historian, and a charter Joy Bell ringer.

She worked as the library teacher at South Penn Elementary School for 40 years, and has enjoyed retirement for the last eight years. Linda was blessed to be her mother's caregiver for three and a half years.

EVAN SWANGER (CLASS OF 2025)

Evan began attending First Presbyterian Church in 2018 and became a church member in January, 2019. Since then, he has played in the handbell choir, served on the Building and Grounds Committee and became co-chair of the committee in 2020 when he was ordained as an Elder. He lives in Hyndman, PA, where he enjoys cycling, woodworking and working on motorcycles.