

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
11 WASHINGTON STREET CUMBERLAND, MD 21502



SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY:
SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS
DECEMBER 28, 2025 11:00 AM

GATHERING

OPENING VOLUNTARY

IN A TINY MANGER
JUDITH BROWN, PIANO

TRADITIONAL BRAZILIAN CAROL

11:00 AM

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT

LO, HOW A ROSE E'ER BLOOMING
THE SANCTUARY CHOIR

"Es Ist Ein Ros"

* CALL TO WORSHIP & PRAYER FOR THE DAY

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all.

Glory to God in the highest!

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Glory to God in the highest!

For a child has been born for us, a Son has been given to us.

Glory to God in the highest!

He is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Glory to God in the highest!

To us is born in the city of David a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord.

Glory to God in the highest!

And the Word became flesh and lived among us.

Glory to God in the highest!

Christ is born!

Give him glory!

Christ has come down from heaven!

Receive him!

Christ is now on earth!

Exalt him! O earth, sing to the Lord! O you nations, praise him in joy, for he has been glorified!

Let us pray...

Glory to you, almighty God, for you have sent your only-begotten Son, that we might have new life. Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for you have become flesh and lived among us that we might become your people. Glory to you, Holy Spirit, for you direct and rule our lives. Glory to you, almighty God, Holy Trinity, now and forever. Amen.

* HYMN #115

AWAY IN A MANGER

"MUELLER"

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Almighty God, we confess that our hearts have not been open to all that you have revealed to us in the nativity of your Son. You sent Christ to be born as a helpless Child, and yet we have not attended to the suffering of children. You chose humble Mary to be mother of our Lord Jesus, and yet we have not attended to the struggles of women. The holy family could find no room in Bethlehem but a stable, and yet we have not attended to the cry of the homeless. You announced your birth to lowly shepherds, yet we have ignored those who tend our farms and fields.

Forgive our lack of attention, and free us for joyful compassion, that we may know Christ in serving others. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

(Silence for personal prayer and reflection.)

RESPONSE #144

IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER (Verse 4)

"CRANHAM"

What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part; yet what I can give him: give my heart.

RESPONSIVE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Every valley is lifted up; every mountain, made low.

Now the glory of the Lord is revealed, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

Forgiven, we walk in the light of the Lord! Thanks be to God!

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

GOSPEL READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

"WHAT AN ARRIVAL"

MARK 1:1-4, 9-11

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

 who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

 "Prepare the way of the Lord,

 make his paths straight",

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

REFLECTION

CAROL #138

WHO WOULD THINK THAT WHAT WAS NEEDED

"WHITE ROSETTES"

THE SANCTUARY CHOIR

Who would think that what was needed to transform

and save the earth might not be a plan or army, proud in purpose, proved in worth?

 Who would think despite derision, that a child should lead the way?

(Chorus): God surprises earth with heaven, coming here on Christmas Day.

Shepherds watch and wise men wander; monarchs scorn and angels sing;

 such a place as none would reckon hosts a holy helpless thing.

Stable beasts and bypassed strangers watch a baby laid in hay; Chorus)

 Centuries of skill and science span the past from which we move,

 yet experience questions whether, with such progress, we improve.

While the human lot we ponder, lest our hopes and humor fray; (Chorus)

MATTHEW 1: 1-3

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar...And so on, for 42 generations –

REFLECTION

MATTHEW 1: 18-21

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'

REFLECTION

CAROL #145

WHAT CHILD IS THIS

"GREENSLEEVES"

LUKE 1:5-8, 11-14, 18 - 20

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children...and both were getting on in years.

Once when Zechariah was serving as priest before God...he was chosen... to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense ...

Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord....

Zechariah said to the angel, 'How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.' The angel replied, 'I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.'

REFLECTION

CAROL #123

IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR (Verses 1 & 2)

"CAROL"

JOHN 1:1-5, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Word was in the beginning with God.

All things came into being through the Word, and without the Word not one thing came into being.

What has come into being in the Word was life, and the life was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen the Word's glory, the glory as of a firstborn heir, full of grace and truth.

REFLECTION

CAROL #113

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

"GLORIA"

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 CAROL #135**THERE'S A STAR IN THE EAST**
THE SANCTUARY CHOIR

"FOLLOW"

There's a star in the east on Christmas morn. Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
It will lead to the place where the Christ was born. Rise up shepherd and follow.

(Chorus): Follow, follow; rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Follow the star of Bethlehem. Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

If you take good heed to the angel's words, rise up, shepherd, and follow.
You'll forget your flocks; you'll forget your herds. Rise up, shepherd, and follow. (Chorus)

*** DOXOLOGY #606****PRAISE GOD, FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW**

"OLD HUNDREDTH"

Praise God from whom all blessing flow; Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. 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.)

Leader: O Christ, our Light:

Congregation: **hear our 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.

*** CAROL #136****GO, TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN**

"Go TELL IT"

*** CHARGE & BENEDICTION****POSTLUDE****GOD REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN**

ALEXANDRIA BLANK, TRUMPET AND 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
Readers.....Carolyn Mathews, Julianna Gallo, Georgene McKenzie, Sharon Squires, Cathy Levitas, and Michael Levitas
Director of Music Ministries/Organist/Pianist.....Judith Brown
Musicians.....Alexandria Blank, Trumpet; The Sanctuary Choir
Audio/Video Technicians.....Joe Aurigemma and Eric Ringler
Ushers.....Jeff and Kathy Getty



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. **Childcare is provided during worship as needed! Please see an usher if you have any questions.**

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.

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

RULING ELDERS: CARL BELT & CINDY CORLEY

ANNUAL GIVING YEAR-TO-DATE: as of December 14, 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	\$ 177,089.00
Pledge Balance Promised Year-to-Date	\$ 182,517.00
Over/(Under)	\$ (5,427.00)

ONLINE GIVING



OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR 2026 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.

YEAR-END GIVING: Thank you for your faithful support of the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church during 2025. Remember that year-end contributions must be received by the church no later than **Tuesday, December 30th** in order to qualify as 2025 contributions for tax purposes.

 This week at our Church	
<u>MONDAY, DECEMBER (29)</u>	CHURCH OFFICE OPEN BRITTANY OUT OF THE OFFICE
<u>TUESDAY, DECEMBER (30)</u>	CHURCH OFFICE OPEN BRITTANY IN THE OFFICE UNTIL NOON
<u>WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER (31)</u>	CHURCH OFFICE OPEN UNTIL NOON BRITTANY OUT OF THE OFFICE NA MEETING
<u>THURSDAY, JANUARY (1)</u>	CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED BRITTANY IN THE OFFICE UNTIL NOON
<u>FRIDAY, JANUARY (2)</u>	CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED BRITTANY IN THE OFFICE UNTIL NOON
<u>SATURDAY, JANUARY (3)</u>	
<u>SUNDAY, JANUARY (4)</u>	ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL SERVICE OF WORD & SACRAMENT: HOLY COMMUNION

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



Monday, December 29, 2025-

Brittany works from home
Zach in the office until 2:00PM

Tuesday, December 30, 2025-

Brittany in the office until noon
Zach in the office until 2:00PM

Wednesday, December 31, 2025-

Brittany out of the office
Zach in the office until noon

Thursday, January 1, 2026- CLOSED

Friday, January 2, 2026-
Brittany in the office until noon
Zach in the office until 2:00 PM



REASON FOR THE SEASON GIVING FORM - 2025

JUST BE... a LIFE SAVER!

NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

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

Reason for the Season can add another "Just Be..." to the Stewardship's list:

"BE A LIFE SAVER". That's the purpose of Reason for the Season. . .the extra-giving, alternative Christmas gift-giving opportunity that provides the means for various organizations to improve or even save lives.

If saving a life seems overwhelming, consider what these groups are doing:

FAMILY CRISIS RESOURCE CENTER has a mission to assist victims and survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and stalking, and to prevent these crimes from occurring in our community through counseling, support, perpetrator intervention and adolescent prevention. The long-term vision is of living safely in a community where abuse and sexual violence are extremely rare. \$ _____

JANE'S PLACE is a safe, child-friendly advocacy center for kids suspected of having suffered abuse, neglect, or sexual assault. It provides a space for them to heal, as well as one location for professionals from different fields to investigate, share information, prosecute, develop effective, coordinated strategies for each unique case and child, and to provide services to help the child and their family heal from the trauma of abuse. \$ _____

WESTERN MARYLAND FOOD BANK was established in July 1983 to help bring additional food into the tri-state area. Since then, it has worked to enhance local food rescue and food distribution systems, addressing the invisible hunger in our community. Currently WMFB provides support to over 100 agencies serving 10,000-13,000 individuals monthly. Millions of pounds of foods have been distributed to individuals in our area. How many lives saved does that equal? **\$** _____

PRESBYTERIAN EDUCATION BOARD SCHOLARSHIPS, PAKISTAN, enables the “poorest of the poor” (Christians) and Muslims, together, to get a quality education that can save them from a life of poverty. They in turn can help others as a teacher, medical worker, engineer, etc. instead of being a bonded worker in a brick factory. We are currently ensuring 7 students get a quality education in Kinnard Academy in Lahore. **\$** _____

MINORITY FOCUS, a partner of the **DR. DICK HARDING CHARITY FUND FOR NEPAL**, has been assisting disadvantaged, deserving Nepali students attain higher education for over 3 decades. Karuna Sarki, currently a Christian Nepali medical student in her 3rd year of study, is a female from the Dalit (“outcaste”) caste. She has 2 more years of study ahead. Without financial help, Karuna could not get the medical knowledge needed to save many lives where such help is very scarce. **\$** _____

CHURCH PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE will be held in Pittsburgh, May 3-7, 2026. At this triennial meeting of Czech ECCB and PCUSA churches, partnerships will be strengthened through worship, music, speakers, partner conversations, discussions, and field trips. Three members of our partner church in Vsetín will be coming. Funds are needed to help with their travel expenses. Members of our church are encouraged to attend also! **\$** _____

As always, you can give to **OTHER MISSIONS** that work at saving or improving lives in various ways: “This Child Here” (Ukraine); Mulanje Hospital (Malawi); Grand ‘Anse (Haiti); PEB school construction (Pakistan); Community Café; Disaster Relief Fund; Special Ministries; Interfaith Food Pantry; Dakota Learning Camp; etc. Using the insert in the bulletin, put it in the offering plate or in the office, or give online. **\$** _____

How appropriate, that we can be a **life saver**, during this season when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, our **life's Savior!**

Sunday School – The Pastor and the Co-chairs of the Faith Formation and Building & Grounds committees will consult by phone and make a decision by 8:00 AM. If Sunday School is canceled, announcements will be made by e-mail to church members, on Facebook, and on the church website.

Worship – Worship will be canceled only in the most extreme weather conditions. If indicated, the Pastor and the Co-chairs of the Worship & Music and Building & Grounds committees will consult and make a decision. If worship is canceled, announcements will be made by e-mail to church members, on Facebook, and on the church website.

