

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
11 WASHINGTON STREET CUMBERLAND, MD 21502



SERVICE OF WORD & SACRAMENT: HOLY COMMUNION
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT: PONDER PEACE
DECEMBER 7, 2025 11:00 AM

GATHERING

OPENING VOLUNTARY

PASTORAL SYMPHONY ("MESSIAH")
FANTASIA ON "GREENSLEEVES"

G.F. HANDEL (1685-1759)
R. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)

PETR SKOPEK & HANNAH LIVINGSTON, VIOLINS; JASON DIGGS, VIOLA; ALYSSA MOQUIN, CELLO; JUDITH BROWN, ORGAN

11:00 AM

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT

GABRIEL'S MESSAGE

PETR SKOPEK & HANNAH LIVINGSTON, VIOLINS; JASON DIGGS, VIOLA; ALYSSA MOQUIN, CELLO; JUDITH BROWN, ORGAN, THE SANCTUARY CHOIR

The angel Gabriel from heaven came
His wings as drifted snow his eyes as flame;
"All hail" said he "thou lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favored lady, "Gloria!"
"For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honor thee,
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
Most highly favored lady," Gloria!

* CALL TO WORSHIP & PRAYER FOR THE DAY

LINDA MELLON AND THE BURKETT FAMILY

Prepare the way of the Lord!

We will make room in our hearts for peace.

Every valley shall be lifted, and every rough place made smooth.

God's peace is coming to heal and restore. Come, Lord Jesus—make your home among us.

Let us pray...

God of peace, calm our hearts and quiet our spirits. In a world of noise and fear, help us hear your still, small voice.

Teach us to build bridges, not walls. Shape us into people who prepare your way of peace. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE: PEACE

* HYMN #104

O LORD, HOW SHALL I MEET YOU

"VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN"

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God, we confess that we let fear rule our lives. We build barriers instead of bridges and choose anger instead of understanding. Forgive us and guide us toward your path of peace. May your Spirit soften our hearts, that we might live as makers of peace. Amen.

(Silence for personal prayer and reflection.)

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son God of God appear.
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.

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST READING

PSALM 72:1-7, 18-19

- ¹ Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son.
- ² May he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice.
- ³ May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness.
- ⁴ May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor.
- ⁵ May he live while the sun endures and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
- ⁶ May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth.
- ⁷ In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more.
- ¹⁸ Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.
- ¹⁹ Blessed be his glorious name forever; may his glory fill the whole earth. Amen and Amen.

ANTHEM

TO THEE MY HEART I OFFER

ELAINE HAGENBERG (1979 -)

THE SANCTUARY CHOIR

To Thee my heart I offer, oh Christ-child sweet and dear;
Upon Thy love relying, be Thou ever near.
Oh take my heart and give me Thine and may it be forever mine.
Oh Jesus, holy, undefiled, my Savior meek and mild.

What brought Thee to the manger, oh Christ-child sweet and dear?
Thy love for me a stranger, be thou near,
Oh Lord how great Thy perfect love, that reaches from the heav'ns above.
Thy love for us, by sin defiled,
That made Thee, God, a child.

Let me be Thine forever, oh Christ-child sweet and dear;
Uphold me with Thy mercy, be Thou near.
Thy hand bestows, Thy gifts to me and all I have,
I offer Thee!
My heart, my soul, and all I own;
Let these be Thine alone.

SECOND READING

ISAIAH 11:1-10

- ¹ A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
- ² The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
- ³ His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear,
⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
- ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
- ⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them.
- ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
- ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of
him, and his dwelling shall be glorious

SERMON

"PONDER PEACE"

REV. ALISON PETERS

MOMENT FOR MISSION

REASON FOR THE SEASON

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

THERE IS NO ROSE

PHILIP STOPFORD (1977-)

KATELYN HENDRIX, MIKAYLA DODGE, SOPRANOS; ZACH DODGE, TENOR
PETR SKOPEK & HANNAH LIVINGSTON, VIOLINS; JASON DIGGS, VIOLA; ALYSSA MOQUIN, CELLO; JUDITH BROWN, ORGAN

There is no rose of such virtue
As is the rose that bare Jesu; Alleluia.
For in this rose contained was
Heaven and earth in little space; Res Miranda. *(wonderful thing)*
By that rose we may well see
There be one God in persons three, Pares forma *(equal in form)*
The angels sungen the shepherds to:
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gaudeamus *(rejoice!)*
Leave we all this worldly mirth,
And follow we this joyful birth. Transeamus *(We go over!)*
-Anon. 15th Century

* DOXOLOGY #749

COME! LIVE IN THE LIGHT!

“WE ARE CALLED”

Come! Live in the light! Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!

We are called to be light for the kingdom, to live in the freedom of the city of God. We are called to act with justice;
we are called to love tenderly; we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

INVITATION TO THE LORD’S TABLE

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

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.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

*You are invited to come forward and receive the elements by Intinction (take the bread and dip it in the cup).
There are also individual cups as well as gluten-free crackers available.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of Peace, we give you thanks for this holy meal, where Christ meets us, restores us, and prepares us for the journey ahead. As bread and cup have strengthened us, send us out to be peacemakers in a troubled world. Make our lives smooth paths for your coming— paths of mercy, justice, and compassion. By your Spirit, help us to live as people of your peace, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Prince of Peace. Amen.

* HYMN #372

O FOR A WORLD

“AZMON”

* BENEDICTION

* RESPONSE AFTER BENEDICTION #765

MAY THE GOD OF HOPE GO WITH US

"ARGENTINA"

May the God of hope go with us ev - ery day, fill - ing all our
lives with love and joy and peace. May the God of jus - tice speed us
on our way, bring - ing light and hope to ev - ery land and race.
Pray - ing, let us work for peace; sing - ing, share our joy with all;
work - ing for a world that's new, faith - ful when we hear Christ's call.

POSTLUDE

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH
ALEXANDRIA BLANK, TRUMPET; 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.....Julianna Gallo
Advent Candlelighters.....Linda Mellon and the Burkett Family
Director of Music Ministries/Organist/Pianist.....Judith Brown
Musicians.....Alexandria Blank, Trumpet; Jason Diggs, Viola; Alyssa Moquin, Cello
.....Hannah Livingston and Petr Skopek, Violin
Vocalists.....Mikayla Dodge and Katelyn Hendrix, Sopranos; Zach Dodge, Tenor
Audio/Video Technicians.....Joe Aurigemma and Eric Ringler
Ushers.....Brenda Luger and Evan Swanger
Nursery.....Rick and Robin Bissell

Worship Notes

We welcome our guest instrumentalists this morning: Petr Skopek and Hannah Livingston, Violins; Jason Diggs, Viola; Alyssa Moquin, Cello.

JOIN THE CUMBERLAND CHORAL SOCIETY TODAY AT 4:00 PM HERE AT FPC!

The CUMBERLAND CHORAL SOCIETY will be presenting its winter concerts during the first weekend of December and we hope you will be able to attend one of them. We will be presenting the 18th century holiday favorite "Gloria" by Antonio Vivaldi and a selection of five pieces from our world today which will comprise a 21st century "Gloria." Composers such as Dan Forrest, Kyle Pederson and Leonard Cohen will be featured. The concert will feature professional musicians, both instrumentalists and vocal soloists, as well as choral society members. Come one, come all!



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.

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**



The flowers in the sanctuary this morning are given to the glory of God in loving memory of their parents, William and Doris Adkisson and Carl and Edna Belt, by Carl and Jane Belt.

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE
RULING ELDERS: CARL BELT & CINDY CORLEY

ANNUAL GIVING YEAR-TO-DATE: as of November 30, 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	\$ 170,066.00
Pledge Balance Promised Year-to-Date	\$ 175,216.00
Over/(Under)	\$ (5,149.00)

ONLINE GIVING



JOIN US FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS!



SECOND SUNDAY SOCIAL-COOKIE CHRISTMAS:

Join us after worship **next Sunday, December 14th** in the Gathering Place for fellowship and cookie decorating. Please bring a few dozen of your favorite cookies to exchange with others, Undecorated sugar cookies will be provided for decorating. **To sign-up, please contact Kelsey Gallo or firstpresbyterianevents@gmail.com.**

BLUE CHRISTMAS 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 Wednesday, December 17th 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 21st, 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.

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. We will celebrate the birth of Christ with a traditional Christmas Eve service that includes communion, candle lighting and Christmas music.

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.



MONDAY, DECEMBER (8)

7:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
 4:45 PM ADMIN & FINANCE MEETING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER R (9)

7:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
 7:30 PM FAITH FORMATION MEETINGS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER (10)

7:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
 12:15 PM STAFF MEETING
 6:30 PM JOYBELL REHEARSAL
 7:00 PM NA MEETING

THURSDAY, DECEMBER (11)

7:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN

FRIDAY, DECEMBER (12)

7:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER (13)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER (14)

9:45 AM ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL
 10:00 AM FAMILY SUNDAY SCHOL CLASS
 11:00 AM SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY
 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT:
 PONDER JOY!
 12:00 PM SECOND SUNDAY SOCIAL:
 COOKIE CHRISTMAS



Tuesday, December 23, 2025-
 Brittany in the office until noon
 Zach in the office until 2:00 PM

Wednesday, December 24, 2025-
 Brittany out of the office
 Zach in the office until noon

Thursday, December 25, 2025- CLOSED

Friday, December 26, 2025- CLOSED

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

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.



Christmas Poinsettias 2025

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 TODAY.

Poinsettias will be displayed in the sanctuary at the 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 \$7.50 for each poinsettia, marking "CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA" in the memo line.

Number of poinsettias: _____ at \$7.50 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** of: (Please circle one) _____

By: _____

Please return your order no later than TODAY.

Christmas Music Offering 2025



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 with "Christmas Music 2025" in the memo line. Proceeds from the Christmas Music Offering will be used to help defray the costs of seasonal guest musicians. **Please submit this offering and dedication no later than Sunday, December 14th.**

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

TOTAL GIFT: \$ _____

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



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

\$ _____

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

\$ _____

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

\$ _____

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, \$ _____

Presbyterian Education Board Scholarships enable 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- DR. DICK HARDING CHARITY FUND FOR NEPAL \$ _____

Dr. 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

\$ _____

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!

OTHER MISSIONS _____ \$ _____

Other Missions that work at saving or improving lives in various ways: “**This Child Here**” (Ukraine); **Mulanji Hospital** (Malawi); **Grand ‘Anse** (Haiti); **PEB school construction** (Pakistan); **Community Café**; **Disaster Relief Fund**; **Special Ministries**; **Interfaith Food Pantry**; **Dakota Learning Camp**; etc. Put this form in the offering plate, the office, or give online.

TOTAL \$ _____

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