

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
11 WASHINGTON STREET CUMBERLAND, MD 21502



SERVICE OF WORD & SACRAMENT: HOLY COMMUNION

FEBRUARY 1, 2026

11:00 AM

GATHERING

OPENING VOLUNTARY

PRELUDE

JUDITH BROWN, ORGAN

FLOR PETERS

11:00 AM

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT

WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF YOU

THE SANCTUARY CHOIR

"MOON"

What does the Lord require of you?

Justice, kindness, walk humbly with your God.

To seek justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.

\* CALL TO WORSHIP & PRAYER FOR THE DAY

In a world that rewards selfishness,  
it is wise to hoard resources, foolish to share.

In a world built on violence,  
it is wise to be suspicious, foolish to risk compassion.

But God's wisdom is not the wisdom of the world:

Greed will not serve us in heaven.

Self-preservation will not save us in the end,  
so we will choose to be foolish; we will choose the way of Love.

Let us pray -

Mysterious God, you whose wisdom baffles kings, make us foolhardy enough to dare to live as if peace is truly possible, here and now. Grant us the audacity to seek justice. Give us courage to risk kindness and love recklessly so that, in Jesus' footsteps, and through your Spirit's surprising blessings, we can journey humbly with you all our days. Amen.

\* HYMN #744

ARISE, YOUR LIGHT IS COME!

"FESTAL SONG"

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, you call us to walk blamelessly, to speak truth from the heart, to seek the good of our neighbors. Yet we confess that we choose comfort over integrity, silence over justice, and blessing ourselves over blessing others. We cling to power rather than humility, and forget that your kingdom belongs to the poor in spirit. Forgive us. Restore us to the path that leads to your dwelling place, and shape us again as people of mercy, righteousness, and peace. Amen.

(Silence for personal prayer and reflection.)

RESPONSE #414

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

"PSALM 46"

Be still and know that I am God. Be still and know that I am God. (x3)

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 15

<sup>1</sup> O Lord, who may abide in your tent? Who may dwell on your holy hill?  
<sup>2</sup> Those who walk blamelessly and do what is right and speak the truth from their heart;  
<sup>3</sup> who do not slander with their tongue and do no evil to their friends nor heap shame upon their neighbors;  
<sup>4</sup> in whose eyes the wicked are despised but who honor those who fear the Lord;  
who stand by their oath even to their hurt; <sup>5</sup> who do not lend money at interest  
and do not take a bribe against the innocent. Those who do these things shall never be moved.

### ANTHEM

#### O LORD, HAVE MERCY THE SANCTUARY CHOIR

ROLAND CARTER

When I fall down on my knees, facing the rising sun,  
O Lord, have mercy on me.  
Let us break bread together on our knees.  
Let us drink wine together on our knees.  
Let us praise God together on our knees.  
O Lord, have mercy on me.

### SECOND READING

#### MATTHEW 5:1-12

<sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup> And he began to speak and taught them, saying:  
<sup>3</sup> "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
<sup>4</sup> "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.  
<sup>5</sup> "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.  
<sup>6</sup> "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.  
<sup>7</sup> "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.  
<sup>8</sup> "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.  
<sup>9</sup> "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.  
<sup>10</sup> "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
<sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.  
<sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

### SERMON

#### "COMFORTING WORDS"

REV. ALISON PETERS

### \* HYMN #510

#### WE GATHER HERE IN JESUS' NAME

"COME, SHARE THE LORD"

## RESPONDING TO THE WORD

### INVITATION TO OFFERING

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

### OFFERTORY ANTHEM

#### YOU DO NOT WALK ALONE

ELAINE HAGENBERG

KATELYN HENDRIX, ALEXANDRIA BLANK, ALISON PETERS, MIKAYLA DODGE, SOPRANOS

May you see God's light on the path ahead

When the road you walk is dark.

May you always hear, even in your hour of sorrow,

The gentle singing of the lark.

When times are hard may hardness never turn your heart to stone

May you always remember when the shadows fall you do not walk alone.

### \* DOXOLOGY #658

#### GOD IS SO GOOD (Verse 1)

"GOD IS SO GOOD"

God is so good; God is so good; God is so good; God's so good to me.

### \* 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 blessing, you have fed us at your table and named us citizens of your kingdom. Strengthen us to rise from this meal to live the beatitudes we have received— to hunger for righteousness, to show mercy, to make peace, and to trust that even in weakness, we are held in your grace. Send us out as people who dwell with you by loving the world you so deeply bless. Amen.

\* HYMN #761

CALLED AS PARTNERS IN CHRIST'S SERVICE

"BEECHER"

\* 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

OLD HUNDREDTH

JUDITH BROWN, ORGAN

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\* 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.....	Juliana Gallo
Director of Music Ministries/Organist/Pianist.....	Judith Brown
Musicians.....	The Sanctuary Choir; Alexandria Blank, Mikayla Dodge, Katelyn Hendrix and Alison Peters, Sopranos
Audio/Video Technicians.....	Joe Aurigemma and Eric Ringler
Ushers.....	Dave and Cindy Corley
Nursery.....	Renee Kiddy and Jane Belt

**THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION-CORPORATION of First Presbyterian Church of Cumberland, Maryland is called by the Session for **Sunday, February 8, 2026.****

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 2026 Congregational Nominating Committee
- To receive the 2026 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](http://www.fpc-cumberland.org) and [www.facebook.com/First.Pres.Cumberland](https://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 or blue 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](mailto:revalisonpeters@gmail.com)  
To help with scheduling,  
please reach out to the Church Office:



<u>MONDAY, FEBRUARY (2)</u>	
7:30 AM	CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
7:00 PM	CHORAL SOCIETY REHEARSAL
<u>TUESDAY, FEBRUARY (3)</u>	
7:30 AM	CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
5:00 PM	MISSION MEETING
7:00 PM	BUILDING & GROUNDS MEETING
<u>WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY (4)</u>	
7:30 AM	CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
12:15 PM	STAFF MEETING
5:30 PM	WORSHIP & MUSIC MEETING
6:30 PM	JOYBELLS REHEARSAL
7:00 PM	NA MEETING
<u>THURSDAY, FEBRUARY (5)</u>	
7:30 AM	CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
12:30 PM	RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE
<u>FRIDAY, FEBRUARY (6)</u>	
7:30 AM	CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
<u>SATURDAY, FEBRUARY (7)</u>	
2:00 PM	BABY SHOWER
<u>SUNDAY, FEBRUARY (8)</u>	
9:45 AM	ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL
11:00 AM	SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION	
12:00 PM	SECOND SUNDAY SOCIAL: ALLIE BLANK BABY SHOWER



The flowers in the sanctuary this morning are given to the glory of God in loving memory of Theresa Leasure, by Eric Ringler and Joshua Gilhart.

## ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

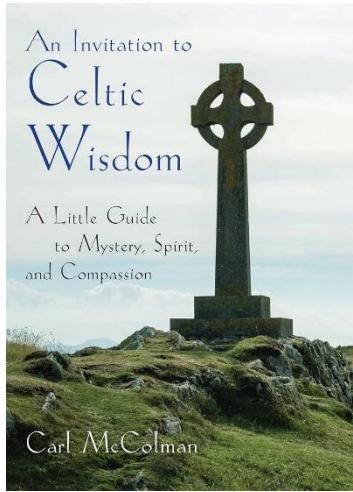
RULING ELDERS: CARL BELT & CINDY CORLEY

ANNUAL GIVING YEAR-TO-DATE: as of January 18, 2026	
Total 2026 Pledges Promised	\$271,126.00
Pre-paid pledges	\$ 70,507.00
<u>2026 Pledge Balance Promised</u>	<u>\$200,618.00</u>
Pledge Balance Received Year-to-Date	\$ 13,050.00
Pledge Balance Promised Year-to-Date	\$ 7,785.00
Over/(Under)	\$ 5,264.00

## 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.



**AN INVITATION TO CELTIC WISDOM: A LENTEN BOOK STUDY**  
**Thursdays: February 19th-March 26th (5:00 PM-6:30 PM) Dinner will be provided.**

This six-week Lenten class taught by Pastor Alison invites us to explore the depth and beauty of Celtic Christian spirituality using Carl McColman's *An Invitation to Celtic Wisdom*. Together, we will journey through three themes—The Celtic Mystery, The Celtic Saints, and Walking the Celtic Path.

Our final class will be a virtual 'fireside chat' with the author, who will answer our questions and help us to close out our time together.

Grounded in Scripture and shaped by prayer, silence, creation, and community, this class offers a contemplative approach to Lent that encourages attentiveness to God's presence in everyday life and prepares our hearts to walk toward Easter with renewed compassion and hope. Please RSVP to [firstpresbyteriansecretary@gmail.com](mailto:firstpresbyteriansecretary@gmail.com) by Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup> to reserve a copy of the book. Books will be available in the church office on Sunday, February 15<sup>th</sup>.

**BABY SHOWER ANNOUNCEMENT:** God continues to bless FPC. Within five months, we will have two babies born into our church family. Allie Blank is having her second daughter at the end of March, and our pastor, Alison Peters, is having her first child in May. The Congregational Care Committee is excited for their arrivals. The celebration is for everyone! Come and play, laugh and celebrate!

**SAVE THE DATES FOR THESE SECOND SUNDAY SOCIALS:**

**Allie Blank's Baby Shower in the Fellowship Hall**

**February 8, 2026 - following worship**

Food provided by Congregational Care Committee: Mexican Food

Baby Registry: Amazon Baby Registry "Allie Blank"

Gifts are optional

**Pastor Alison's Baby Shower in the Fellowship Hall**

**April 12, 2026 - following worship**

Food provided by Congregational Care Committee: TBD

Baby Registry: Amazon "Alison Peters" and Baby list "Alison Peters"

Gifts are optional

**BABY SCAVENGER HUNTS:** Three weeks prior to each baby shower the Congregational Care Committee invites our FPC family to join in "Baby Scavenger Hunts". Beginning on Sunday, January 25, as you walk into the side entrance and/or choir loft, look for hidden baby items. Once you find a baby item, place it in the basket located in the back of the sanctuary.

There will also be a baby bottle game in the hallway as you enter the church. Take a guess at the correct number of animal crackers for a chance to win!



# Second Sunday: Baby Shower

PLEASE JOIN US FOLLOWING  
WORSHIP TO HONOR

## ALLIE BLANK

WE WILL CELEBRATE IN THE  
FELLOWSHIP HALL TO ENJOY A ROBUST  
MEAL, BABY BINGO, AND FELLOWSHIP,  
TO SHOWER ALLIE AND BABY GIRL WITH  
LOVE!

## FEBRUARY 8, 2026

ALLIE'S REGISTRY MAY BE FOUND AT:  
[HTTPS://WWW.AMAZON.COM/BABY-REG/ALLIE-BLANK-MARCH-2026-FROSTBURG/NZMCIGQ6CBZI](https://www.amazon.com/BABY-REG/ALLIE-BLANK-MARCH-2026-FROSTBURG/NZMCIGQ6CBZI)

## RULING ELDER BIOS

### **BILL BUTTERMARK (CLASS OF 2029)**

*Edited from Bill's lengthy and interesting bio which all are welcome to read in its entirety  
(It is available in the Volunteer Office).*

Bill is a native of Glen Cove, NY and was baptized and confirmed in The Reformed Church of Locust Valley, NY. His family moved to Pomfret, CT when he was a teenager. College studies led him into a BS in marketing and also where he met his first wife, Susan Stransky.

In the early 1980s he accepted a management position at Hills Department Store in Cumberland and moved his family here for a short year. They were active members at First Presbyterian Church, participating in choir (Sue) and teaching 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Sunday School (Bill). Many moves for advancement in retail management resulted in family disruption, divorce, another marriage, divorce, and another career in real estate appraisal.

Over the decades, Bill has been a member of several denominations. He is presently remarried to Susan and has three adult children who live out of the area. He and Sue live in Wiley Ford with their pets, two beagles and two cats. He loves history, particularly the history that permeates this area and looks forward to serving as an elder in the ministry of FPC.

### **JULIE COURTNEY (CLASS OF 2028)**

Julie attended West Bethesda Presbyterian Church in Williams County, Ohio from birth. She was baptized there when a high school confirmand and was a Youth Advisory Delegate to the General Assembly in Denver, Colorado in 1973.

She became a member of First Presbyterian Church in 1979, participating in the choir, youth fellowship and Presbyterian Women's Mary-Martha Circle.

Julie has taught adult and youth Sunday School classes, gone on work camps with both youth and adults, helped with funeral receptions and Vacation Bible School. She has directed of the JoyBells since 1982.

Julie is am currently co-chair of the Faith Formation Team and on the Worship and Music Committee. She chaired the search committee for the Director of Christian Music, which brought Judie Brown back to our organ bench. She has served several times on the Nominating Committee.

Julie and her husband, Bob, have three children: Jon (Meghan) on the West Coast, Josh (Ashley) on the East Coast and Melissa in Tennessee. Their grandsons enjoy participating in church activities when they visit. Julie has a great love for our church family and appreciates the many ways we minister to each other and our community.

### **KATHY GETTY (CLASS OF 2029)**

Kathy, her husband, Jeff, and their three daughters became a part of our church family a little over 30 years ago when they moved from Baltimore, MD to Cumberland. Kathy and Jeff had enrolled their children into Learning Tree and at the encouragement of longtime church member, Barbara Leasure, they decided to join First Presbyterian Church. Since then, they have volunteered in various capacities.

Kathy ushered, served in the nursery, participated in the Administration and Finance Committee, audited the church's financial records, helped to count the weekly collection, chaired the special organ fundraiser and co-chaired the Stewardship Campaign for the first half of her time as a member of FPC. For the past ten years, she has had the pleasure of serving as the chair of the Stewardship Campaign. Kathy had declined to join Session since she was working full-time and raising three children. But when Buck Belt approached her this year, she felt it was time to take on this expanded role and help the church she loves continue to grow.

### **LINDA MELLON (CLASS OF 2027)**

Linda grew up in the Presbyterian Church in McConnellsburg, Pa. When her husband, Jim, and Linda had their daughter Jessica, they became members of First Presbyterian in Cumberland and Jessica was fortunate to have many children her age in the church. From Learning Tree to Youth Club, their family had an active church life.

Linda's education includes graduating from Penn State and the University of Illinois. After teaching for two years in a middle school in New York, Linda was hired as a physical education teacher at ACM. She retired in 2006, and then continued to teach fitness classes.

In 2010, Linda began raising Scottish Highland cows at her farm in PA. Jessica married Mick Burkett at the farm, with the cows in attendance. Linda has two wonderful grandchildren, James, 8 and Mary Alice, 5. They both enjoy activities at the farm. The two families only live two miles apart in LaVale, so they spend lots of time together.

Over the years, Linda has taught Sunday School, ushered and attended many classes at church. She appreciates the opportunity to be an elder at this time.

### **ERIC RINGLER (CLASS OF 2029)**

Eric brings strong organizational and leadership experience to the Session. He is currently serving professionally as a Manager at Aetna, a CVS Health company. His journey to First Presbyterian Church began out of a need for a sense of belonging after struggling to find a faith community that fully accepted him and his partner Josh, who are members of the LGBTQIA+ community. He found a spiritual home and a welcoming church family here at FPC.

Since joining, Eric has dedicated himself to the life of the church, singing in the choir, serving on the recent PNC and as the technical lead responsible for creating and running the Sunday livestreams. He has accepted the nomination for Ruling Elder as a way to glorify God and to give back to the church that embraced him, hoping to use his gifts and talents to help guide the congregation's future. In his spare time, Eric is an avid theatre enthusiast. He shares his life with his partner, Josh, and their "fur kid," Lennox.

### **DEBORAH ANN ROPER (CLASS OF 2029)**

Debbie was baptized into the Christian faith at age nine and has served as choir member, Vacation Bible School teacher, usher, and event planner. Debbie has been married to Gary Roper for fourteen years and together they have five children and nine grandchildren. They moved to Cumberland on October 31, 2022. They describe Cumberland as "Little Italy".

Debbie holds a master's degree in nursing administration and has fifty years of nursing experience. She is nationally recognized for her expertise in developing stroke centers across the United States.

Debbie describes one of her greatest achievements as owning a Bed and Breakfast in McKinney, Texas. She enjoyed helping to make memories and spoiling each of her guests, whether it was an event such as a wedding, an anniversary, a tea party, or making birthday cakes.

Serving others is Debbie's motivation. Debbie and Gary joined FPC in January of 2025 and immediately began volunteering for the Community Café. Debbie welcomes the opportunity to serve the congregation of FPC.