

December 2017

The Voice of Faith

Advent

Advent Festival

December 3, following worship in Fellowship Hall

Greening of the Sanctuary

Saturday, December 9, 9:00 a.m.

Children's Christmas Pageant

December 17 during worship

Christmas Eve

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper & Candle Lighting

Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols

5:30 p.m.

Morning Worship with Communion

10:45 a.m.

Chapel

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Please send articles and photos for the Voice of Faith by the 15 of the month. seekfaith@faithpcbalt.org

WORSHIP

Sundays at 10:45

First Sunday of Advent

December 3

Daniel 3: 1 [2-7] 8-30

Daniel: The Fiery Furnace

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Advent Fest following Worship

Second Sunday of Advent

December 10

Ezekiel 37: 1-14

Ezekiel: Valley of Dry Bones

Third Sunday of Advent

December 17

Luke 1:46-55

Pageant

Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24

10:45 a.m. in the Chapel

5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Lessons & Carols, designed for a multi-generational congregation.

Luke 2: 1-14

The birth of Jesus

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Wednesdays Bible Study

11:00 a.m. in Woodbourne Room

Join Rev. Christa Burns and friends for a lively discussion of the upcoming Sunday lesson. Everyone is welcome! No preparation is required.

December 6 - Ezekiel 37: 1-14

December 13 - Isaiah 55: 1-13

December 20 - Luke 2: 1-14

Please note, there will be no Bible study on December 27.

Dear Faith Family,

This Advent season seems strange to me. For one thing, because of the calendar, we only have two "regular" Sundays - December 3 and 10. December 17 is our pageant. And, of course, December 24 is Christmas Eve! The season seems abbreviated to me and, consequently, a little more stressful!

In addition, the scripture readings for the 3rd and 10th are Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego in the fiery furnace and Ezekiel prophesying to the dry bones. I challenge you to think about how these very untraditional readings fit into Advent!

It won't surprise you that I have been thinking about the Advent readings and have concluded that they are both stories about being in places we don't want to be. In fact, perhaps we could say that they are stories about "Waiting for God...In All the Wrong Places". A lot of life is about not getting to choose where we find ourselves waiting for God. Maybe we find ourselves in the hospital, or in a funeral home, or alone, or in a strange place where we don't know anyone, or in a fiery furnace. What does it mean to wait for God in places like these?

On Christmas Eve, we will ponder how Mary and Joseph found themselves in a very unlikely place when God actually arrives!

Advent begins on December 3rd. We will light the first candle of the Advent wreath and celebrate communion. Following worship, we will have our annual Advent Festival with lunch, shopping and fun things to make. We hope to have our Advent Devotions ready to send home with you on the 3rd.

Our children will perform their pageant on the 17th. Susan Johnston has written one of her unique Christmas pageants. She manages always to give our children lines that actually sound like them! What other church do you know that has a resident author who comes up with a new pageant

every year?

On Christmas Eve, there will be two services. The morning service will be at 10:45 AM in our new chapel and the 5:30 service of lessons and carols will be in the sanctuary. Communion will be celebrated at both services.

I am very fond of Jan Richardson's writing. In her book *Circle of Grace*, she includes this blessing:

Blessed are you
who bear the light
in unbearable times,
who testify
to its endurance
amid the unendurable,
who bear witness
to its persistence
when everything seems in shadow
and grief.

Blessed are you
in whom the light lives,
in whom
the brightness blazes -
your heart
a chapel,
an altar where
in the deepest night
can be seen
the fire that
shines forth in you
in unaccountable faith,
in stubborn hope,
in love that illumines
every broken thing
it finds.

My wish this Advent season is that you are able to bear the light...even if you are some place you'd rather not be...especially if you are some place you'd rather not be.

You are loved,
Christa

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Robin Nemser, *chair*

Church School Schedule

The Church School schedule will be amended during the month of December. The children will begin rehearsal for the Christmas Pageant during worship on December 3, but will return to the sanctuary for communion. A second rehearsal will take place on December 10. These rehearsals will occur during worship following the Moment with Faith Kids. The Pageant will take place during worship on December 17.

Dec. 24 – Morning Christmas Communion Service in chapel – no Sunday School
Dec. 31 New Year's Eve., no Sunday School

Adult Nurture

*Sundays at 9:15 in Woodmont Room
led by Randal Woodfield, DMA*



The Magnificat

The infancy material found in the first two chapters of the Gospel of Luke contains three major hymnic pieces—Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46-56), Zacharias' Benedictus (Luke 1:67-79), and Simeon's Nunc dimittis (Luke 2:28-32). Our Advent music study this year begins by looking at all three passages, then continues by narrowing our focus to the Magnificat and its echoes of language from the Hebrew Bible. The bulk of our study includes listening some of the brilliant choral settings inspired by Luke's record of Mary's expression of her humble desire to serve her God.

WORSHIP & THE ARTS

Judy Sperling, *chair*

Sunday, November 05 was designated as All Saints Day. During the service we remembered Luckye Austin, Audrey Cousart, Marjorie DeLoache, Edith Elliott, Russell Emmons, and Margaret Leary, all members of our Faith Family who died during the past year. During Communion all present were invited to light a candle for those named and other loved ones carried in their hearts. It was a beautiful service.



A service of Thanksgiving and Commitment was held on Sunday, November 19. In previous weeks members at large spoke during brief Minute for Stewardship segments about how being part of the Faith Family has enriched their lives. During worship, Stewardship Commitments for the upcoming year were dedicated. A celebration luncheon was enjoyed following worship in the Fellowship Hall.



Ileana & Isabella *Minute for Stewardship*

Stewardship Sunday



On Sunday, November 19, Faith celebrated the formal end of its stewardship campaign "Share Faith." As of this writing, about two-thirds of the giving units have submitted pledge cards, and we look forward to receiving others. As has been our custom over the past several years, we marked the end of the campaign by enjoying a luncheon of submarine sandwiches and ice cream sundaes. This year, there was a special twist to the luncheon as we were joined in worship and fellowship following the service by visitors from the Cameroon community in greater Baltimore. These lovely folks came to mark the one year anniversary of Daniel Mbah's death and to make an offering in his honor. Daniel Mbah is the father of Faith member Vivian Mbah. Some of you will recall that Faith Church supported Mr. Mbah's efforts to build a church in his village in Cameroon.

Our guests participated in the worship service by singing traditional African songs and offering tributes to Mr. Mbah. They also brought contributions to the luncheon so that all who attended were able to sample wonderful cuisine from Cameroon. It is not every sub sandwich that has plaintain sides, along with cole slaw. What a special day!

Going forward, the Stewardship Committee hopes to make more information about electronic payments available to assist congregation members with fulfilling their pledge commitments. Thanks are due for a successful stewardship campaign to members of the committee: Co-chairs Scott Bissett and Carl Herber, members Anna Burns, Paula Burger, Bill Millen, Gail Poorbaugh, and Neil Nemser, and Christa Burns, ex officio. But, most importantly, thanks to all who have committed to Share Faith, both financially and personally.



2017 Per Capita

2017 Per Capita is \$34.15 per Member

To date members have paid only \$2,445.40 of the \$5293 owed. If you have not contributed, please do so now if you are able.

Per capita fees are the fees we, Faith Presbyterian, pay for each member of our church in order to support the mission of the wider church. Just as our civil taxes pay for

roads and schools, we are part of a larger church that does a bigger mission than just our individual congregation, and that provides us services as a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Contribution Statements

Faith will close out the year on January 8, 2018. The final contributions for 2017 will be due then, check received after this date will be recorded as 2018.

Please date checks in the year you would like them recorded. Please call the office with questions about your pledge. If you would like your 2017 Statement before then, contact the office.

Dear Reverend

It was such an honor for you and the church to allow us to share my father's memorial. We were very happy that it was successful and the church liked our tradition and custom and most of all liked the food. What the church has done for my father and the church that he built, will never be forgotten. Your moral support and prayers when my father was in the hospital will always be cherished. My family will be forever grateful!

I will definitely visit periodically. Faith church still remains my church, since I started attending in 1987 when I first came to the USA.

Have a blessed day and happy holiday.

Vivian Mbah



Mittens Finds His Way Home

(Based On a True Story)

by **Rev. Christa Fuller Burns**

Told on Christmas morning 2016 at Faith Presbyterian Church in the City of Baltimore, Maryland

My name is Mittens and I am a black cat with light green eyes and white paws, hence the name Mittens. I also have a white spot just under my chin. I am telling you this because I don't have a picture of me. My story begins sadly. I was an orphan cat – my mother abandoned me and I never knew my father. One day a family spotted me in an adoption center and adopted me. The family took me home and I was very, very glad to have a home. Now I had a family who loved me and cared for me and my life looked a lot happier. Unfortunately, my family thought I was a girl and they gave me a girl name - Mittens. I mean, don't you think Mittens sounds like a girl name? Then they took me to the vet and discovered I was really a boy but the name Mittens stuck so Mittens it is. I don't really mind the name Mittens because it was given to me out of love.

One thing you should know about me: I am a very independent cat! Maybe that comes from being an orphan and having to fend for myself. I come and go as I please and I don't

take nothing from no one!

The mother in my family, knowing that I was an independent sort who likes to roam, tried to get me to stay inside but I could always find a way to get out. I can even turn the knob on the door. Not only that, but I have been known to operate the garage door! And, when I am hungry, I jump up on the kitchen counter and push the "on" button on the can opener.

One day, my roaming spirit caught up with me. I was out on my usual prowl and I got lost. As I discovered later, my family didn't worry about me at first. After all, they knew I was a very independent cat. However, after two days, the family became concerned and started to ask themselves: where could that cat be?

One of my favorite places was the family's boat and that is where I usually go. But when I got to the boatyard I discovered the family boat wasn't there. It was being repaired someplace else.

I prowled around a bit, exploring the boatyard. All of a sudden, a dog came along and chased after me. That is when I got lost and I soon realized that I didn't know where I was.

I found myself on busy city streets. I was lost and hungry and cold.

Meanwhile, the family put up fliers with my picture on them: Lost: Mittens Scared and Lonely. Likes milk, birds, and boats.

I was really lost and I knew it. I kept going, hoping to find something familiar, some clue as to where I was. Eventually, I found myself in the mountains – a place even more

strange to me than the city streets. I learned later that mountains are named the Wasatch Mountains. Whatever their name, the mountains seemed giant to me and they were deserted and cold and strange. However, the mountains did have things to eat – mice and birds and things like that. Lucky for me, I can hunt. Even so, a lot of the time while I was in the mountains, I was hungry. I slept near trees under a blanket of leaves. And, I kept going, always hoping I would find my way home. I kept going for what seemed like forever, never seeing any humans or any sign of civilization.

One day, I came across a house. I sneaked into the back yard and as I was looking for something to eat, people came outside. Man, I thought, I am a goner! The people picked me up and they fed me some milk and the next thing I know I am in their car. Those people took me to the vet! I do not like the vet! I yowled and arched my back but it was no use. The vet checked me out and I could hear him tell the people that my paws were all messed up from walking all that way. My toenails were torn. I was skinny. The vet scanned me and when he did I heard him exclaim, “Well, I’ll be darned! This cat has a microchip! This little fella is from the other side of the mountains. How on earth did he find his way here? How on earth did he make it all this way?”

The doctor did find my family and they came to pick me up. I heard the doctor explain my condition – how my feet needed tending and how I needed to build my strength back up.

He said: “Animals are amazing. I think that they have instincts and abilities that we just can’t understand. I once knew of a cat who was missing for three or four years. His people had moved and the cat escaped while

they were unpacking their stuff in their new home. The cat eventually came back to the original home.”

This is the story, he said, about a special cat that was just trying to find its way home. He didn’t know how far the path was going to be, but it didn’t matter to him. He was going to go for it and find his way home.

When I finally did get back home, I discovered that it was Christmas. I love Christmas! You can’t believe how much fun I can have with a Christmas tree! I was warm and safe and fed and, most of all, I was loved. I was home.

On Christmas Eve, my family gathered in the living room. I was curled up in front of the fire. They read a story about a family far away from home who had a baby in a place where animals are kept. I liked that part as I could picture myself in that barn. The family had to leave their home because it was dangerous. They lived in Egypt until it was safe to return home. I know that story, I thought. That is my story. We all need a home, we all need to find our way back home. We all need to have a home in our hearts.

FAITH FAMILY LIFE

Happy December Birthday!

3rd Grail Lent
4th Bill Millen
5th Diane Borgatti
6th Mary Ellen Curtis
7th Mehki Jones
12th John Marinacci
13th Vivian Mbah
18th Rashaun Millen
19th Gordon Rush
20th Dorothy Weller
22nd Beverly Baker
Audrey Trapp
23rd Peter Burger
Susan Johnston
26th Colin McGill
30th Dylan Brown
Janice Williams

If you would like your birthday added or if it is incorrect, please contact the church office.

Please Keep in Your Prayers

Betty Bunce
Christian Dunyoh
Mildred Miller
Esmie & Leon Stirling
Nancy Stutzer
Betty Lou Tampieri
Dot Weller

Please send your prayer requests to Christa Burns, *Pastor* 410-435-4330, and/or Sharon Will 410-254-6788. Prayers are answered!

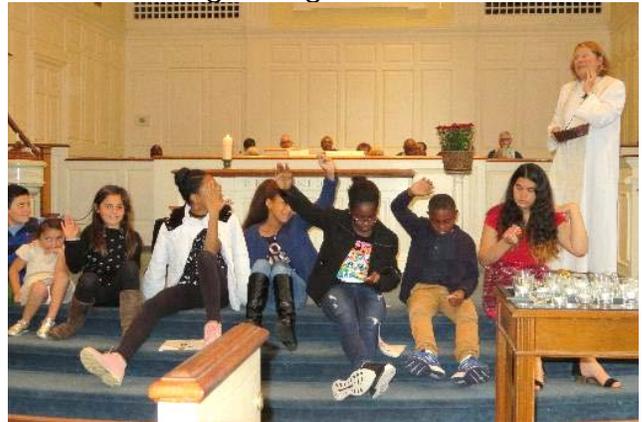


When Baltimore had its most recent moratorium on gun violence, Father Joe was thinking of Marcus Edwards. He repainted the cross where Marcus was killed and placed an aloe plant nearby. Unfortunately, the plant disappeared but our witness to Marcus endures.

All Saints



All Saints is a time to rejoice in all who through the ages have faithfully served the Lord. The day reminds us that we are part of one continuing, living communion of saints.



Brunch for Prospective Members

On Saturday, December 9, at 10 a.m., Church Growth will sponsor a coffee hour for folks interested in considering becoming members of our congregation. This will be an informal conversation and orientation to Faith Church, with a chance to ask questions about the church, what being a member means, and what distinguishes the Presbyterian denomination.

Please come if you want to explore Faith. You are welcome to bring children. It would be helpful also to let the Church office know (at 410-435-4330) if you plan on attending. If you have any questions or concerns, either Pastor Christa Burns or Chair Paula Burger (443-928-8091) would be happy to talk with you.

Autumn Workday



Thank you to all who participated on our Fall workday. Amid wonderful fellowship, much was accomplished. We are thankful for your help. The Plant & Property Committee.



Cuba Notes by Audrey Trapp

We have received word from our partner churches that they are doing well. Without full-time pastors or seminary students to lead them, the elders in each church are leading their congregations in worship, Christian Education and mission work in their communities.

At the Meneses Church, Lay Leader Mercy Rodriguez and Elder Roboerley are leading the congregation. At the Iguara Church, Elder Manoli and other members are continuing the programs started by Lester Manso Blanco, who was re-assigned to pastor the Calabazar Church. Both Roboerley and Manoli are beginning to take classes



part-time at the seminary in Matanzas.

About two years ago, Central Florida Presbytery formed a partnership with El Centro Presbytery and individual churches are forming church-to-church partnerships using the model that Baltimore Presbytery has successfully established. In October, Pineda Presbyterian Church in Melbourne, Florida has been visiting the churches in Meneses and Iguara and, in a visit in October, signed a formal partnership agreement with the sessions of each church.

I communicate frequently with Pat Zinn from the Pineda Church and we share information and news. She reports that in their October visit there was a real shortage of fresh fruits and vegetables because the hurricane badly damaged the crops – and the large banana trees outside of the Meneses Church were toppled. We are excited to have the Pineda Church share in the Cuba ministry.

At the Advent Festival on Sunday, December 3rd, Audrey will have lovely notecards and calendars for sale that feature beautiful photographs of Cuba taken by members of the Baltimore Presbytery Partnership team. Proceeds from this sale will go toward a fund-raising effort to pay the monthly cell phone charges for our Cuban pastors. They depend heavily on the cell phones to communicate with their parishioners, their fellow pastors, and the El Centro Presbytery office.

Next visit to Cuba

We are planning to go for a week in June after school ends – exact dates to be determined. Will you go with us? Let Audrey or Christa know of your interest or any questions you have. We will start planning in earnest after the first of the year as it takes several months to obtain visas. Come with us – it will change your life!

Harford House Thanksgiving



The Harford House dinner was a great success! Thank you, thank you to all you who helped make it so- the many cooks, organizers, servers and volunteers! You helped make the hearts of 70 people full this Thanksgiving.



Many thanks,
Karen Burd and Janet Thomson



Christmas Flowers and Funds

During this festive season, we ask you to remember friends and loved ones with a contribution. Seasonal flowers beautify our worship service and your contributions to Bread and DEAR Funds reflect Faith's mission. Your memorials and celebrations will be published in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

Name _____ Envelope # _____

Poinsettias

Orders must be received by **December 4**. _____ Poinsettia(s), \$12.00 each

Please circle one
In Memory/Celebration of

Please circle one
In Memory/Celebration of

Flower Donation Enclosed \$ _____

Faith's Music Ministry *supports the music ministry*

Please circle one
In Memory/Celebration of

Please circle one
In Memory/Celebration of

Music Ministry Donation Enclosed \$ _____

Faith's Bread Fund *provides food for those in need.*

Please circle one
In Memory/Celebration of

Please circle one
In Memory/Celebration of

Bread Donation Enclosed \$ _____

DEAR (Deacons Emergency Assistance Resource) *provides assistance to Faith Church members.*

Please circle one
In Memory/Celebration of

Please circle one
In Memory/Celebration of

DEAR Donation Enclosed \$ _____

Please place this form in the offering plate or mail it to the church office along with your donation. Please designate "flowers," "music," "bread fund" or "DEAR" on the memo line of your check. Separate checks are preferred.



Parents' Day Out!

For Parents or Guardians of Children with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

St. Matthew Catholic Church

In partnership with The Arc Baltimore

5401 Loch Raven Blvd, Baltimore MD 21239

Saturday, January 14, 2017

Drop your child off at 9AM and return for them by 1PM

Ages 3 -14 years • Siblings welcomed!

SPACE IS LIMITED

**There is no charge
but you must register in
advance!**

**Registration Required-Deadline
Wednesday, January 11, 2017**

Contact:

The Arc Baltimore

Traci Moore

410-296-2272 ext. 5322

tmoore@thearcbaltimore.org



We have competent, trained, and loving people just waiting to play games, do crafts, play ball, or just read with your child while you are out relaxing or doing those needed chores.

December

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
					1	2
 3 9:15AM – WB Adult Forum 10:45AM – ST Worship Noon – FH Advent Festival	4 7:00PM – WB Finance	5 7:00PM – WB Deacons	6 11:00AM – WB Bible Study	7 6:30PM-WB Bells 7:30PM-CR Choir	8	9 9:00AM – ST Greening 10:00AM – WB Brunch for Prospective Members
10 9:15AM – WB Adult Forum 10:45AM – ST Worship	11	12	13 11:00AM – WB Bible Study	14 6:30PM-WB Bells 7:30PM-CR Choir	15	16
17 9:15AM – WB Adult Forum 10:45AM – ST Worship Pageant	18 7:00PM – WB Session	19 7:00PM – WM Men's Group	20 11:00AM – WB Bible Study	21 6:30PM-WB Bells 7:30PM-CR Choir	22	23
 24 Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols 10:45AM – CH Worship 4:00PM – ST Worship	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29	30
31 9:15AM – WB Adult Forum 10:45AM – ST Worship						

Locations

ST – Sanctuary
 CH – Chapel
 CR – Choir Room
 WB – Woodbourne Room
 WM – Woodmont Room
 FH – Fellowship Hall
 OC – Off Campus