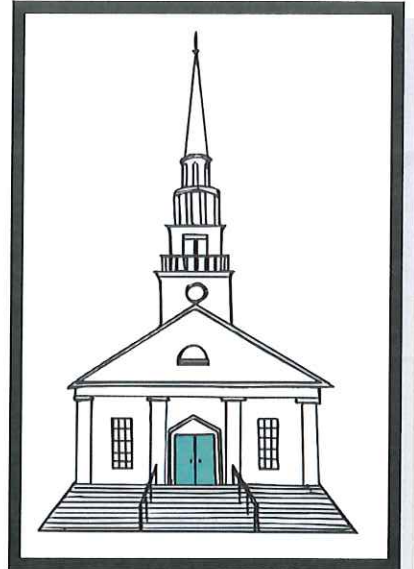


FRIENDSHIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

small church | BIG MISSION



December 2024



When I attempted recently to clear space in my email account (a sisyphian exercise), I targeted emails tagged as “Promotions”. I deleted thousands of them. Later, to my dismay, some of those promotions ended up in my regular inbox! One such promotion gave some fodder for this month’s newsletter. It was from Etsy, dated November 12th. The subject line caught my eye, asking me, “Are you ready for Advent?!” I literally laughed out loud! Ha!

For most of us, we just delete those ads without thinking twice. But, this tagline did catch my eye. It led me to wonder: “Well, am I ready for Advent? Since when?” And then, “Wasn’t it just Halloween, and aren’t I supposed to be getting ready for Thanksgiving right now?!” Then I rationalized: “I need to get ready for Christmas, not Advent, right?!” Then, with a sigh I said, “Yes, Advent isn’t a thing I have to get ready for...” I set the worry aside, until it came back: “Am I supposed to get ready for Advent!?” Ahhh! The pressure of our commercialized world. Nothing is sacred; everything is an opportunity to make a buck.

Take a deep breath. **Rest assured, friends--there is nothing about Advent you need to get ready for.** At least so says this Minister. Had Etsy searched Wikipedia they could have read, “It is not known when the *period of preparation* for Christmas that is now called Advent began, though it was certainly in existence from about 480.” In other words, Advent is not something for which we are to get ready, *per se*, instead, Advent is a time set aside by the church a long time ago to provide space--*spiritually*--to get ready for Christmas, as in the birth of Jesus (not the presents stuff)..

This year during the time of getting ready called Advent, thanks to the recommendation of Kim Ness, we are going to get ready for the celebration of the birth of Jesus using a devotional series created by the Salt Project, called “The Starry Night.” It will help guide our focus throughout Advent with themes and ideas for families and individuals alike. The themes of Advent are among our favorites: “Hope”, “Love”, “Joy”, and “Peace!”

I’m sure Etsy will get lots of our business this time of year as we get ready for our commercialized way of observing Holy Days, but Etsy, leave Advent alone, please... “What’s that dear?” “You want me to get some Advent Calendars filled with chocolate?” “Yes, dear...I’m on it!”

The Peace of Christ be with you all, Craig, “He Tried” Topple

8531 Macon Hwy
Athens, GA 30606
706-543-6077 (office)
706-543-6199 (fax)
www.gotofriendship.org

Sunday School @ 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship @ 11:00 a.m.

Pastor:
Rev. Craig Topple
505-795-4890 (cell)
revtopple@gmail.com

Director of
Faith Formation & Outreach:
Kim Ness
kim.presbyterian@gmail.com

Church Administrator:
Donna Rigsby
office@gotofriendship.org





Adult Sunday School

On Sunday mornings at 9:30 AM, we gather for fellowship and conversation on the scriptures being read in worship for the day!



Our next 2nd Sunday fellowship will be December 8. This is a perfect time to get to know one another and to just catch up on non-church things. Light snacks will be served.

We hope you will make plans to stay and fellowship on the 2nd Sunday of each month!

ACTS for December: Dried Beans/Peas in Holiday Colors

This past week, thousands of Can-a-thon cans of food were delivered to ACTS and the sorting has begun. Non-canned food is always needed, so Friendship will collect dried beans/peas through the end of the year. Think **Small Red Beans**, **Red Kidney Beans**, **Green Split Peas**, White Lima Beans, Navy Beans and Great Northern Beans. ACTS has a standard menu of foods that is distributed to each family or individual, so package size is important. For dry beans, the package size should be 1 lb., give or take a couple of ounces. A 2 lb. bag is too big; a 10 oz. is too small.

The Christmas Eve offering at Friendship is traditionally earmarked for ACTS.



	Liturgist	Offering Counters	Communion Servers
Dec 1	Karen Norris	Alan White	Henry & Judy Hibbs
Dec 8	Youth	Kathie Shinholser	
Dec 15	Kevin Kelly	Marks Towles	
Dec 22	Wendy Arthur	Ted Walker	
Dec 29	John Norris	Karen Norris	



Prayer List

- Clare Newcomer
- A.J. (great grandson of Richard & Evelyn Montgomery)
- Charles Kauderer
- Sarah Bennett
- Rhenn Priep
- Don & Shirley Harris
- Nina Sanders and her daughter Emily Rea
- Lauren Raineau (daughter of Steve & Roberta Schacher)
- Michael Arwood (Lydia Lee's nephew)
- Libby Rice
- Robert Pittard - (friend of Dori Allen)

POINSETTIAS will be placed in the Sanctuary this Christmas. If you wish to donate toward the purchase of these plants, please pick up a form in the narthex, complete and place in the offering plate or drop off in the church office during normal office hours. Deadline for orders is **December 1**. The names of those being honored or remembered will be listed in the December 22nd bulletin.



Christmas Staff Gift Offering

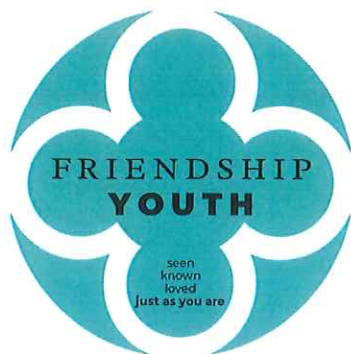
This is a season of thanksgiving, and one of the things I'm thankful for is that even though we are a small congregation at Friendship, we have top-tier staff! There's excitement about our worship and education, we have an amazing music program, our preschool has one of the highest reputations in Oconee County, and our office administrator keeps our church operating smoothly. We are truly blessed to have these folks at Friendship!

As we approach the Christmas season, we are taking a collection for staff holiday gifts. I hope you'll join me and Henry in including our Friendship staff in your Christmas giving. If you are able to contribute, you can place a check in the offering plate, or send a check to the church earmarked "staff gifts" by December 15th.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope this holiday season brings you much joy!

Judy Hibbs, treasurer





Friendship YOUTH NEWS

By: Kim Ness, Director of Faith Formation & Outreach

Youth Group Gathering: December 1 @ 7pm

As we prepare for the Season of Advent, middle and high school youth will meet tonight to begin a series on HOPE. We'll meet in small groups to discuss where we can find hope in a weary world, and how to hold onto it when things get hard.

Seeking Donations

We are thrilled to have a new youth group at Friendship, and now we need your help to create a comfortable welcoming space. We are looking to create a seating area under the stairs with couches or chairs in good condition. In addition, we are planning to update our kitchen - looking for another refrigerator and an electric stove to add to the space. If you have items you would like to donate, please contact Kim (kim.presbyterian@gmail.com). Thank you!

Youth Website

We had a great turnout on Sunday, November 17, for our Youth Kickoff Meeting. If you missed it, you can find all the youth info at our new youth website (bit.ly/friendshipYOUTH). Thanks for your support of this important ministry.



Friendship Preschool News

By: Susanne Hayes, Director



Very Thankful & Grateful for our wonderful Teachers, Students and Friendship Families.
November has been a full month of visits from our Community Helpers
and enjoying time with family & friends at our Class Thanksgiving Feasts!



Scouting at Friendship

By: Rick Ormsby, Scoutmaster

November was another exciting and productive month for **Troop 149** and our extended Scouting family. From advancement opportunities to special events and outdoor adventures, our scouts are showing incredible dedication and growth.

Eighteen of our scouts attended the **Cherokee District Advance-a-Rama** at the University of Georgia. This event offered the chance to work on a wide range of merit badges under the guidance of experts. Among the badges started or completed were **Chemistry, Citizenship in the Nation, First Aid, Swimming, Fishing**, and more. It was a fantastic opportunity for scouts to expand their skills and knowledge.

Meanwhile, several adult leaders attended Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills training at Scoutland where they developed essential outdoor skills and leadership techniques to better support our Scouts during camping and outdoor adventures.

Our **Philmont Crew** kicked off their preparation for next summer's expedition by completing **CPR training**, attending a gear review session with Philmont Ranger Mason Champion, and participating in their first **shakedown hike** on the **Appalachian Trail**, traveling from Springer Mountain to Hightower Gap. This hike was a crucial step in testing their gear and learning how to work together as a team. Meanwhile, our younger, **non-Philmont-bound scouts** formed a second crew and hiked in the opposite direction, crossing paths with the Philmont Crew mid-trail for a shared moment of camaraderie.

We also had a special guest this month, as **Athens-Clarke County Superior Court Judge Eric Norris** visited Troop 149 to discuss the **Constitution and civil rights**. This insightful discussion helped our scouts deepen their understanding of citizenship and make progress toward their rank advancement.

Life Scout Jackson Arledge made great strides toward achieving Eagle Scout rank this month by leading his **Eagle Scout service project** at **St. Stephen's Anglican Church**. Jackson's hard work and leadership are inspiring, and he is on track to complete his Eagle requirements before the new year.

Looking ahead to December, Troop 149 is preparing for our annual **Pancake Breakfast with Santa** at Friendship Presbyterian Church. This festive event will take place on **Saturday, December 7th, from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM**. Tickets include a delicious breakfast and photos with Santa and are available at oconeetroop149.org/pancake. Prices are **\$12 for adults, \$6 for kids**, and **children under six eat for free**. All proceeds support our scouts' upcoming adventures, including January's trip to **Crystal River, Florida**, where they will snorkel with manatees in the warm springs of the Gulf Coast.

Our **all-girl Troop 5149** had an exciting milestone this month as well, completing their first backpacking trip to Pine Mountain. Three of their most experienced scouts hiked over **8 miles**, helping two scouts complete their **Camping merit badge**. Congratulations to Troop 5149 for their hard work and achievement!

Meanwhile, **Pack 149** continues to thrive, having completed their **World of Scouting meeting** in November. They are now eagerly preparing for their upcoming **Winter Carnival and Potluck** on **December 5th**, bringing together their families for a festive celebration.

We are incredibly proud of all the hard work and growth our scouts continue to demonstrate. As always, we extend our deepest thanks to **Friendship Presbyterian Church** for their ongoing support of our scouting program. We hope to see many of you at the **Pancake Breakfast with Santa** as we celebrate the season and raise funds to support our scouts' exciting adventures ahead.

Scouting Adventures



Troop 5149 ready to hike



Adult leaders training together



Scouts on the trail



Troop 5149 on Pine Mountain



Scouts learn CPR



Hike planning and gear review



BOY SCOUT TROOP 149
JOIN US FOR PANCAKES WITH SANTA
SATURDAY DECEMBER 7, 8-10:30A

\$12 ADULTS, \$6 CHILDREN OVER 6 YEARS, UNDER 6 EAT
FREE

FRIENDSHIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
8531 MACON HWY,
ATHENS, GA 30606

PREORDER TICKETS ONLINE: [HTTPS://OCONEETROOP149.ORG/PANCAKES](https://oconeetroop149.org/pancakes)





Area Congregations are invited to participate in the annual
Holiday Benevolence Market
of Covenant Presbyterian Church (and other community partners),
Sunday, Dec 8, noon - 3pm.

Folks can attend the market to purchase handmade gifts and foods or they can
volunteer. Contact for more information: Rev. Amy Baer, 706-380-
8482, abaer@covpresathens.org.



MESSIAH SING ALONG

Sun December 1, 2024
7pm

Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-day Saints
1080 Julian Drive, Watkinsville GA

Joseph Napoli, Conductor

FREE Messiah Sing Along
Open to the Public
Experience the joy of the season with
family and friends!



Link to Purchase
Paper Sheet Music

www.athensmessiah.org



Link to Download Free
PDF Sheet Music



Giving in November				
	Nov 3	Nov 10	Nov 17	Nov 24
Attendance	20	68	61	57
General Giving	\$2,330.00	\$921.00	\$3,188.25	\$1,366.00

Friendship Presbyterian Church	
October 31, 2024	
Selected Assets and Liabilities	
Cash in Bank -- General Fund	\$5,385.59
Cash in Bank --Restricted Fund	<u>14,873.38</u>
Total Cash in Bank	\$20,258.97
Savings -- Corporate Money Market	\$37,763.83
Savings -- New Covenant Securities	\$70,793.68
Restricted Educational Funds	\$8,275.15
Income Statement Summary—October 2024	
Receipts from Congregation	\$9,267.00
Dye House Rent	874.00
Support from Preschool	5,348.00
All Other Income	<u>0.00</u>
Total Receipts	<u>\$15,489.00</u>
Administration Expenses	\$3,099.86
Personnel Expenses	11,318.00
Membership Development & Care Expenses	0.00
Discipleship/CE	0.00
Worship Expenses	300.00
Bldg & Grounds Expenses	<u>1,263.72</u>
Total Operating Expenses	<u>\$15,981.58</u>
Net Income / (Deficit)	(\$492.58)



Online giving is available on our web site! This is an easy, safe, and secure way to make donations to the church, without having to go to the trouble of writing and mailing a check. Simply go to our web site GoToFriendship.org and scroll to the bottom and click on **Give Now**. Doing so will take you to a secure portal where you will be asked to create a simple profile, and then allow you to make donations through your bank account or debit or credit card!



December

Names in red-birthdays

Names in green-anniversaries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1  9:30am Adult Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service w/Communion 7:00pm BSA Troop 5149 for Girls	2 <i>Carol McKillip</i> 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 149 7:00pm Recorder Ensemble Rehearsal	3 7:30pm Athens Chamber Singers rehearsal	4 Preschool Staff Meeting 7:00pm FPC Choir rehearsal	5 7:00pm Pack Meeting	6 Church Office Closed	7  8:00am Pancake Breakfast with Santa
8  9:30am Adult Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service 12:00pm 2nd Sunday Fellowship 7:00pm BSA Troop 5149 for Girls	9 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 149 7:00pm Recorder Ensemble Rehearsal	10 7:30pm Athens Chamber Singers rehearsal	11 7:00pm FPC Choir rehearsal	12	13 Church Office Closed	14 <i>Lisa Buchanan</i> Scout Pumpkin Chunkin'
15  9:30am Adult Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service 7:00pm BSA Troop 5149 for Girls	16 <i>Katie Roberts</i> 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 149	17	18 Jane & Marks Towles <i>Troy Border</i> 4:30pm Stated Session Meeting	19  9:30am Preschool Santa Sing Along	20 Church Office Closed Preschool Holiday Break	21
22  9:30am Adult Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service 7:00pm BSA Troop 5149 for Girls	23 Church Office Closed Preschool Holiday Break 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 149	24  Church Office Closed Preschool Holiday Break 5:00pm Christmas Eve Service 11:00pm Christmas Eve	25  <i>Alice Lund Smith</i> Church Office Closed Preschool Holiday Break	26 Church Office Closed Preschool Holiday Break	27 Church Office Closed Preschool Holiday Break	28
29 <i>Holly Ivy</i> 9:30am Adult Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service 7:00pm BSA Troop 5149 for Girls	30 Church Office Closed Preschool Holiday Break 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 149	31 Church Office Closed Preschool Holiday Break	1  Church Office Closed Preschool Holiday Break	2 Church Office Closed Preschool Holiday Break	3 Church Office Closed Preschool Holiday Break	4

Please submit news for January's
Newsletter to the church office
no later than

Sunday, Dec 29, 2024

Due to office schedule
submissions after this date may
not appear in next month's
newsletter. All submissions are
subject to editing.



FRIENDSHIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

As followers of Jesus Christ, assured of God's unconditional love for everyone, we strive to be an accepting and joyful community that centers upon worship, encourages personal growth, celebrates diversity, nurtures individual gifts, and moves beyond boundaries to share, through service, Jesus' love, compassion, and justice in an uncertain world.

Grace to you and peace, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Friendship Presbyterian Church
8531 Macon Highway
Athens, GA 30606