

FRIENDSHIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

small church | BIG MISSION



*From the
Pastor*

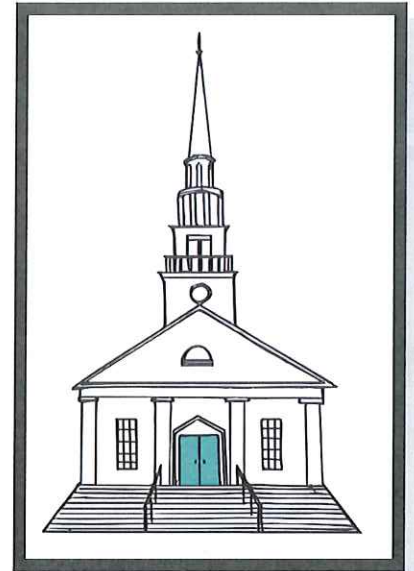
January 2025

"When Jesus was 12 years old..." he was found in the temple among the elders. (cc.Luke 2:41-51)

What a joy it has been to be part of the Friendship Presbyterian community. We begin a new year, and the third month of our journey together. Already so many wonderfully pleasant surprises have occurred, thanks be to God! I could make a long litany, but I won't at this time. Instead, I want to signal one of those pleasant surprises. But first, a preamble: During the interview process for this interim position, I learned there were no children or youth who actively participated in the life of the congregation. I was perplexed. There is a very active pre-school housed in the church building, as well as two active Scout Troops. Additionally, the church building is directly across the street from Athens Academy of some 950 Pre-K through twelfth grade students, and with whom the congregation has had a historical connection. What gives? Add to this mystery, as I've gotten to know the congregation through visitations in your homes, singing in the choir, worshipping and having fellowship with you, the verdict is in: ya'll are a delightful people! Lydia Lee said in an interview, "I would love to see children and youth in the church again." Well, lo and behold, her prayer has been answered, *thanks to the amazing ministry of Kim Ness and the youth with whom she works*. Children and youth are becoming an active part of the life of the congregation of Friendship Pres! And *what a joy* it has been to not only witness youth and families in morning worship and at evening gatherings, but also to witness the overwhelmingly enthusiastic reaction to this occurrence by those who have been part of this congregation over the years.

Given the momentum of this occurrence and how life-giving it has been, God willing, let's build on it in the new year! Let's together emphasize fostering and supporting the church's ministry with youth and children, and their families. What might this look like for you and the congregation as a whole? Kim and I have ideas, but for now, pray about it. Be open to the Spirit's leading. Share that leading with Kim or me.

(continued on page 2)



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 Toppie
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



(continued from page 1)

In chapter 2 of Luke's gospel we meet elders Simeon and Anna who had a practice of being in the temple day after day and were filled with hope and expectation. Lo and behold, Joseph and Mary present their Child. Overjoyed, Simeon took the child in his arms, and "blessed" the parents. Similarly, Anna "began to praise God." As we begin a new year filled with hope and expectation, thanks be to God for your faithfulness over these years that has brought us to this moment of children and youth in the sanctuary once again.

--Craig

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 January 12. 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!



Would you like home communion or a pastoral visit? Please let the church office know if Pastor Craig can pay you a visit. He thoroughly enjoys visiting with folks in their homes, but, because he is limited in his time due to his work at Highland Hills, he really appreciates people letting him know to come see them so he can schedule it.

January
Volunteers

	Liturgist	Offering Counters	Communion Servers
Jan 5	Lydia Lee-Jones	Marks Towles	Henry & Judy Hibbs
Jan 12	YOUTH	Ted Walker	
Jan 19	Alice Lund Smith	Karen Norris	
Jan 26	Caren Smith	Alan White	

Annual Congregational meeting
January 26, 2025
Immediately following the worship service

Nominating Committee

FPC needs two members of the congregation to serve on the Nominating Committee. This constitutional committee--which meets infrequently--should be comprised of members elected by the congregation to discern future officers (Elders and Deacons) of the congregation. Should you have a call to serve on this committee please contact Donna in the church office. If you have questions about what these duties entail, talk to Craig. Those willing will be voted in at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, January 26.



On January 26, we will be welcoming new members into the life and ministry of Friendship Presbyterian Church. In the PC(USA), the only official requirement of membership is to confess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. However, membership is about so much more. It's about making an intentional commitment to grow your faith. It's about working together to build a more just and loving world. It's about community and a sense of belonging.

What does it mean to belong? Belonging is a sense of place, of purpose, of community. Brené Brown teaches that belonging is about standing in your truth, embracing vulnerability, and fostering meaningful connections—not by conforming, but by showing up as your most authentic self.

Whether you have been a lifelong Presbyterian searching for your next church home, a former Baptist who hasn't stepped into a sanctuary in years or a first time churchgoer, we welcome you. We welcome you to join Friendship Presbyterian Church, just as you are.

Email Rev. Topple to learn more (revtopple@gmail.com).



For ACTS in January: SNOW!



The Yankees among us who have migrated South still remember snowy winters, so what better foods for ACTS than those that remind us of snow: **rice, grits, sugar, flour**. ACTS buys standard sizes and types of each food item, so it is important that donated food conform to those sizes.



Rice: 1 lb. bags

Grits: 2 lb. bags, quick cooking (5 min.)

Sugar: 4 lb. bags, ordinary, white

Flour: 5 lb. bags, **self-rising**



AS always, ACTS is happy to receive all kinds of food, so be on the look-out for bargains.



The staff would like to thank everyone for the Christmas Bonus and wish each of you a very Happy New Year.

I FEEL THE NEED...THE NEED FOR SPEED

TOP RUN

ATHENS ACADEMY / ANNUAL SPARTAN 5K

40

40th Annual Spartan 5K & Sprint
Saturday, February 8 / 9:00 AM

\$30/runner & \$75/pre-registered family rate
Register NOW at Active.com!

ATHENS ACADEMY

Early Bird Rate \$25 by 1/23/25

Sign up now for the 40th annual Spartan 5K on Saturday, February 8, 2025! Early registration rate is \$25 before January 23. [Click here](#) for more information and to register the whole family! And remember, Spartans have the NEED...the NEED for SPEED!

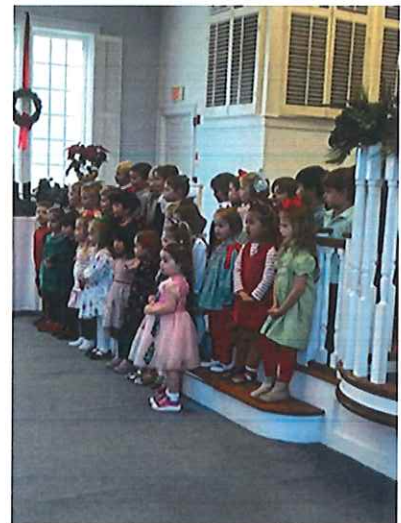
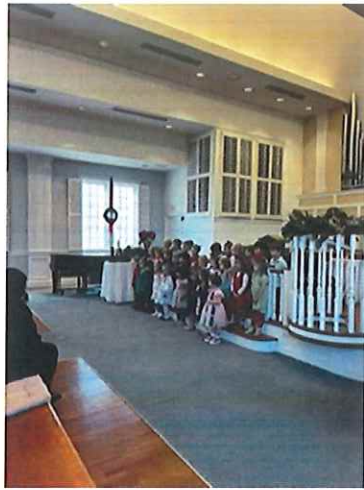


Friendship Preschool News

By: Susanne Hayes, Director



Our preschool students had a wonderful time celebrating the season during our annual Santa Sing-Along! It's always a delightful way to spread holiday cheer, featuring a special visit from Santa, along with refreshments and great fellowship. This event marks the perfect end to what has been a truly fantastic first half of the school year. We are grateful for our wonderful families and wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Scouting at Friendship

By: Rick Ormsby, Scoutmaster

December was a busy and exciting month for **Troop 149**, **Pack 149**, and **Troop 5149**, filled with service, fun, and holiday cheer!

We kicked off the month with our **Pancake Breakfast with Santa**, a huge success thanks to the 14 scouts who helped serve well over 100 customers. This festive fundraiser brought the community together and raised important funds for our scouts' adventures. To keep the holiday spirit going, the scouts are also offering a **Christmas Tree Pickup Service** on **January 4th** for \$15 per tree within a 15-mile radius of Friendship Presbyterian Church. If you'd like to sign up, visit <https://oconeetroop149.org/trees/>. Fundraisers like these help our scouts earn money for trips and other activities.

This month, several scouts visited the **Athens Animal Shelter**, where they prepared supplies and paperwork for foster families caring for dogs awaiting adoption. Our scouts also supported **Life Scout Trey Danis** with his **Eagle Scout project**, renovating an outdoor area near the playground at **Oconee County Primary School**. Trey's leadership and effort are making a lasting impact on the school community.

Holiday celebrations were in full swing as scouts from **Pack 149**, **Troop 149**, and **Troop 5149** participated in the **Watkinsville Christmas Parade**, spreading cheer and handing out candy to parade watchers. Later in the month, the scouts hosted a group of Webelos from Pack 149 for the **Pumpkin Chunkin event**, where they demonstrated their **lashing skills** to build slingshots and catapults. Instead of pumpkins, the scouts launched tennis balls at cardboard boxes, making it a fun and educational event for everyone involved.

Just before Christmas, around 20 scouts attended our annual **Lock-In at Athens Academy**. The overnight event was filled with games, pizza, and camaraderie as the boys did their best to stay awake until dawn.

On the advancement front, our scouts worked on their **Communications, Personal Management, and First Aid merit badges** while learning about **Outdoor Ethics** and **Leave No Trace principles**. Several older scouts completed a two-day **Wilderness First Aid course**, earning their **Red Cross certification** and preparing to take on leadership roles in future outdoor adventures.

First Class Scout Elliot Williams and Tenderfoot Eli Sapp served as the color guard during the opening game of Athens' new ice-hockey team, the Rock Lobsters.

Finally, **Life Scout Jackson Arledge** wrapped up his Eagle Scout project in November and is now submitting paperwork for his **Board of Review** in January. A big congratulations to Jackson on this major achievement as he nears the finish line of his trail to Eagle!

Thank you, as always, to **Friendship Presbyterian Church** for your continued support of our scouts. Your encouragement and involvement help make these adventures possible. We look forward to another exciting year ahead and hope to see you at future events. Happy New Year!

Scouting Adventures



Pancake Breakfast with Santa



Scouts at Pumpkin Chunkin



Scouts Celebrate at Pumpkin Chunkin



Cub Scouts at Play



Cub Scouts Learn Flag Etiquette



Practicing Splints at Wilderness First Aid Training

Boy Scout Troop 149

Christmas Tree Pickup and Disposal

\$15

Jan 4th Pickup

oconeetroop149.org/trees



1. Place Your Order Online by Jan 1st.
2. Leave the Tree on the Curb by 10 am on Jan 4th.

If you have any questions
email bstroop149@gmail.com

Scout Name: _____



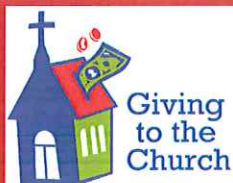
*Must be within 15 miles From Friendship Presbyterian Church
8531 Macon Hwy, Athens, GA 30606

Make sure to put the
name of the scout online!

100% of Donations
Go to the Scouts of Oconee Troop 149!

Giving in December				
	Dec 1	Dec 8	Dec 15	Dec 22
Attendance	43	66	40	44
General Giving	\$3,162.74	\$665.00	\$3,170.00	\$2,290.00

Friendship Presbyterian Church	
November 30, 2024	
Selected Assets and Liabilities	
Cash in Bank -- General Fund	\$1,944.68
Cash in Bank --Restricted Fund	<u>15,723.38</u>
Total Cash in Bank	\$17,668.06
Savings -- Corporate Money Market	\$37,848.63
Savings -- New Covenant Securities	\$72,722.92
Restricted Educational Funds	\$8,500.61
Income Statement Summary—November 2024	
Receipts from Congregation	\$8,447.25
Dye House Rent	
Support from Preschool	5,348.00
All Other Income	<u>116.37</u>
Total Receipts	<u>\$13,911.62</u>
Administration Expenses	\$1,797.21
Personnel Expenses	11,514.30
Membership Development & Care Expenses	0.00
Discipleship/CE	69.50
Worship Expenses	215.44
Bldg & Grounds Expenses	<u>2,883.33</u>
Total Operating Expenses	<u>\$16,479.78</u>
Net Income / (Deficit)	(\$2,568.16)



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!



January

Names in red-birthdays

Names in green-anniversaries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 Holly Ivy 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
5 9:30am Adult Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service 7:00pm BSA Troop 5149 for Girls	6 Preschool Holiday Break 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 149 7:00pm Recorder Ensemble Rehearsal	7 7:30pm Athens Chamber Singers rehearsal	8 <i>Kevin Kelly</i> Preschool Staff Meeting 10:00am Finance Meeting 7:00pm FPC Choir rehearsal	9	10 Church Office Closed	11
12 9:30am Adult Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service 12:00pm 2nd Sunday Fellowship 7:00pm BSA Troop 5149 for Girls	13 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 149 7:00pm Recorder Ensemble Rehearsal	14 <i>Alan & Suzanne White</i> <i>Charles Kauderer</i> <i>Wendy Arthur</i> 7:30pm Athens Chamber Singers rehearsal	15 12:15pm Preschool Open House 7:00pm FPC Choir rehearsal	16 6:00pm Den Meeting 7:00pm Pack Meeting	17 Church Office Closed	18
19 9:30am Adult Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service 7:00pm BSA Troop 5149 for Girls	20  Church Office Closed Preschool Closed 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 149 7:00pm Recorder Ensemble Rehearsal	21 7:30pm Athens Chamber Singers rehearsal	22 <i>Carolyn Sloan</i> 7:00pm FPC Choir rehearsal	23	24 Church Office Closed	25
26 9:30am Adult Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service 12:00pm Annual Congregational Meeting 7:00pm BSA Troop 5149 for Girls	27 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 149 7:00pm Recorder Ensemble Rehearsal	28 7:30pm Athens Chamber Singers rehearsal	29 7:00pm FPC Choir rehearsal	30	31 Church Office Closed <i>Henry Hibbs</i> <i>Jane Towles</i> <i>Lizbet Adams</i>	1



PRAYER LIST

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

Sunday, Jan 26, 2025

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

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)

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