

First Presbyterian Church

Americus, Georgia

A community of faith responding to God's call.
Loving, learning and leading people to Jesus Christ.



Third Sunday of Advent

On this Sunday, we rejoice in God our Savior, a God who has remained faithful to all of us through the promises made to our ancestors in the faith long ago. God continues to pay attention and be most mindful of those our society often marginalizes and leaves out: those experiencing poverty, widows, orphans, disabled folks – and God prepares a way for them. When John the Baptist asks if Jesus is really the Messiah, Jesus's response to the messenger was simply to tell John what he witnessed: the disabled are included and have good news, the dead are raised, and the sick are healed. When we see good news for all people, including the "least" among us, then we see the Gospel. This is in accordance with the promises God made to their ancestors and to the people forever.

CHRISTMAS COOKIES & COCOA

Today, Sunday, December 11th
Following Worship



WELCOME!
OUR NEW
MUSIC DIRECTOR & ORGANIST
MR. PERCELL KELLEY

PRAYER LIST

We lift up prayers for those listening Sunday mornings on WISK 98.7, Radio.
May they be spiritually fed. Please Pray For - Our Nation, Our Church; Our
Presbytery, Our Pastor, Our Staff, Our Officers, Campus Ministry,
Our Community and especially:

MEMBERS AND CHURCH FRIENDS AT HOME &/OR IN RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

Bob & B.J. Bryan Mary Mackey Nancy Miller Gloria Johnson Pat Hill
Blanche Palmer Kathy Newkirk Anne & Malcolm Perry

MEMBERS REMEMBERED

Darryl and Cara Hawkins; Carrie Hawkins
Jim and Nancy Herron
Nate Herron; Mitch and Riley

PRAYER CONCERN

~ Update on Carla Cullison ~ Gary Cullison's wife, Carla, has been in and out of the
hospital and rehab facilities for months following a car accident on Wednesday,
August 10th. Carla had a pacemaker put in at Phoebe Main in Albany on Tues,
Dec.6th and is doing well. As a church, let us continue to
join in prayer for a full recovery.

Correspondence may be sent to:

Gary, Carla and Caitlin Cullison 399 Bob Dodson Road, Unit A Plains, Georgia 31780
Gary Cullison's cell: 229-733-9468 Email: gary.cullison@outlook.com

MISSIONARIES REMEMBERED IN PRAYER

- Ben & Esther Campbell, Push the Rock Intl.
- Tim & Lois Hunter, Spoken Worldwide
- Rev. George Haugen (PC USA Minister), Antioch Partners

*Please notify the church office at 924-2162 or office@americuspresbyterian.org
if you would like to add someone to our prayer list and/or request a PrayerGram.*

FALL CHURCH EVENT CALENDAR
DECEMBER ELDER OF THE MONTH - Joy Thompson

COOKIES & COCOA & HEAVENLY MUSIC ~ TODAY, Sunday, December 11th we have the great joy of welcoming to our congregation as our new Music Director Organist Mr. Percell Kelley! Mr. Kelley is an extremely accomplished organist and musician. We feel blessed to have him lending his gift of music each Sunday in worship at First Presbyterian. Pianist Janice Veal will be playing several duets with Mr. Kelley today. After worship, we will celebrate with Christmas cookies and hot chocolate.

VACATION DAY ~ Marcia Seymour, Thursday, December 15th

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY ~ Sunday, December, 18th we will be collecting pledge cards in worship and praising God for the steadfastness and joy that comes in continually serving our Savior.

HANDBELL CHOIR ~ It is time to ring the bells! If you are interested in participating this Christmas in the Church Handbell Choir, please connect with Cynthia Richmond! 229-942-6547/cynchj5@gmail.com

FLINT RIVER PRESBYTERY MEETING ~ Session has approved our church hosting the February 4, 2023 Flint River Presbytery meeting. If you are willing to serve on a Task Force to work on preparing for hosting this event, please let Pastor Sommer or the church office at office@americuspresbyterian.org/924-2162. Call, text or email us with your name and contact information. A sign-up sheet will also be available at the back of the church.



First Presbyterian Church of Americus, GA
Sunday, December 11, 2022 ~ 11:00 a.m.



Today is Gaudete Sunday, which means "Rejoice." Often, the third candle of the Advent wreath is a pink candle, or rose candle, as it is also called Rose Sunday. In the early tradition of Advent, the season was forty days, mirroring Lent, and a period of fasting. Gaudete Sunday was a day to break the fasting and celebrate, for Christmas is drawing near. Today is a day of rejoicing!

PRELUDE

Organist: Percell Kelley and Guest Pianist: Janice Veal
"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel By Lani Smith" and
"There's a Song in the Air By Kari Harrington"

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Sommer Bower

***HYMN (Glory to God Hymnal #133).....**

Organist: Percell Kelley and Guest Pianist: Janice Veal
"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

ADVENT WRATH LIGHTING: THE THIRD CANDLE

Richard Pollette &
Sharon McFarland

*God is our light and our salvation, the lamp unto our feet.
At the day of rejoicing, All shall walk by the light of God.
We light this third candle, celebrating the joy of God's light that will shine forever,
and ever, and ever.*

Lighting of the 3rd (pink) candle
*Lamb of God, Light of the World, shine forever. May hopelessness and fear and death
fade away into the shadows, as we come to know Your love and light in our hearts, in
our lives, in our world, forever. Amen.*

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel " #88 (verse 5)

**O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 11:2-11

NRSV updated version

Messengers from John the Baptist

2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" 4 Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. 6 And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

Jesus Praises John the Baptist

7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. 9 What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

11 "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!

***HYMN (Glory to God Hymnal #140).....**

Organist: Percell Kelley and Guest Pianist: Janice Veal

"Once in Royal David's City"

MESSAGE.....Pastor Sommer Bower

"Peace on Earth, Goodwill to All"

OFFERTORYOrganist: Percell Kelley

"O Holy Night!..... James Murphy"

***DOXOLOGY (Glory to God 606).....Organist: Percell Kelley**

"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

*The whole world is exploding in Christmas lights, for unto us a Child is born. And so we give thanks and we give back. With tongues and gifts and praise may we proclaim,
"The Lord is my light, my light and my salvation."*

***HYMN (Glory to God Hymnal #113).....**

Organist: Percell Kelley and Guest Pianist: Janice Veal

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

***BENEDICTION**

This Advent may we proclaim that Jesus preached and lived a peace grounded in the love and grace of God, who tells us we are worthy and who offers us a more meaningful way to walk upon this earth. This is a genuine peace that is hard won, involves hard work, but endures. This is a genuine peace that no illness can destroy, no failure can revoke, no hardship can erase. It is the light of our salvation, the hope for the world.

POSTLUDE.....

Organist: Percell Kelley and Guest Pianist: Janice Veal

Hymn (Glory to God Hymnal #119)

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"