

December 2022

Church Staff

Pastor

Rev. Kenneth E. Kovacs, Ph.D.

Associate Pastor

Rev. Dorothy L. Boulton, M.Div.

Director of Music

Greg Knauf, D.M.A.

Organist/Assistant Director of Music

Wendy Johnston, M.M.

Communications Consultant and Messenger Editor

Lisa Roca

Mission Coordinator

Kristy Herring

Membership Secretary

Peggy Carr

Bookkeeper

Virginia Daiger

Administrative Assistant

Regine Bonhomme

Sexton

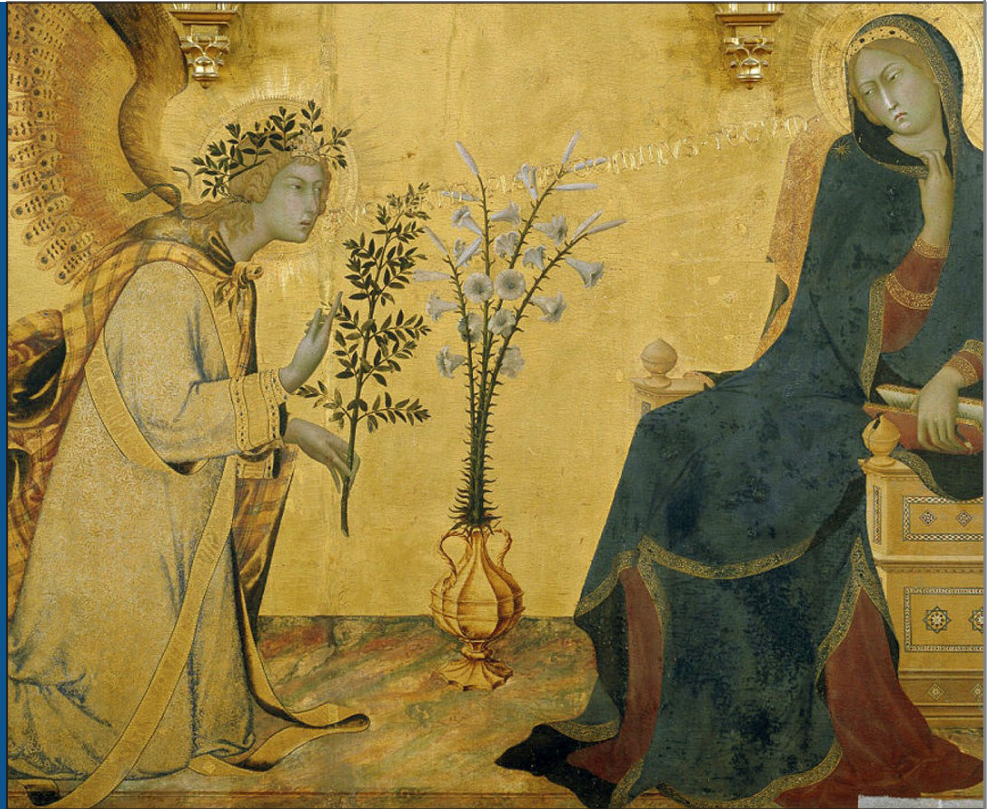
Bernard Lawson

Child Care Center Director

Michelle Hepner

Child Care Center Office Manager

Ashley Graham



Descent into Flesh

By Kenneth Kovacs

Many years ago, my friend Chuck Coblentz gave me a volume of poems by Robert Frost (1873-1963) titled *In the Clearing* (1962). Chuck and I have been friends for nearly 35 years. We lived on the same floor in Alexander Hall at Princeton Seminary and have been through a lot together over the decades. A United Methodist pastor, Chuck has served several churches in New Jersey. And he's obsessed with Robert Frost. Chuck drew my attention to one particular poem in this collection, "But God's own descent." I return to it almost every year around this time, and I've shared it before. It takes my breath away.

—INSIDE—

Growing in Grace: Join us in person at 9 a.m. in the library for adult education in Advent. See [page 2](#).

Advent and Christmas: Activities and holiday worship schedule. See [pages 4 and 5](#).

Envision Fund Updates: Spring 2023 Grant Cycle Announcement. See [page 8](#).

Stephen Ministry Leaders: First group of Stephen Ministers commissioned. See [page 10](#).

DESCENT INTO FLESH

Continued from Page 1

*But God's own descent
Into flesh was meant
As a demonstration
That the supreme merit
Lay in risking spirit
In substantiation.
Spirit enters flesh
And for all it's worth
Charges into earth
In birth after birth
ever fresh and fresh.*

As we lean into Advent and approach the Nativity of Our Lord, we turn again to consider the mystery of the Incarnation. From the Latin, *in-carnatio*, meaning literally, “going into flesh.” John’s Gospel tells us, “And the Word,” the eternal Logos of God, “became flesh and we have seen his glory” (1:14). It’s a theological claim that sets us apart from every other religion. Throughout this season, we will tell the story that has captured our imaginations for millennia. But this season is about more than remembering that first Christmas. History doesn’t save us; it doesn’t renew us; it doesn’t allow us to participate in the ongoing presence of the

Spirit who moves through creation. Yes, we can celebrate what took place in the past, but we are also being asked to claim and celebrate Christ’s ongoing incarnating presence in our lives, in our flesh, in you, and in me.

What if the Christ child is waiting to be birthed anew in us, “in birth after birth, ever fresh and fresh”? It’s a question we will be exploring in worship through Advent and Christmas. The Incarnation is not an isolated, one-time event that occurred long ago but something that has fundamentally changed and is changing the very structure of our existence. In the incarnation, we discover a “demonstration” that God is forever “risking spirit” by being active in the world and our lives. “The Spirit enters flesh/ and for all it’s worth/ charges into earth.” Where? In Jesus Christ, absolutely, fully. But also, in us when the Spirit takes up residence in our lives, in birth after birth, ever fresh and fresh. In your birth and my birth ever fresh and fresh. Glory to God in the highest!

Image: “Annunciation” (c.1333) by Simone Martini (1284-1344) and Lippo Memmi (1291-1356), Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy.

GROWING IN GRACE

Adult Education in Advent

Led by Kenneth Kovacs

**Join us in person at 9 a.m. in the library.
Incarnation (December 4 and 18)**

The Prologue to John’s Gospel says, “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14). “For us and for our salvation,” the Nicene Creed affirms, “he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.” For two Sundays in Advent, we’ll explore the mystery of the incarnation and the centrality of this doctrine in the history of the Church. And we’ll give special attention to the thought of German Dominican theologian and mystic Meister Eckhart (c.1260 - c.1328), who wrote extensively, even provocatively, about the meaning of the incarnation for our lives. Here’s a sample: “What good is it to me that Mary gave birth to the son of God fourteen hundred years ago, and I do not also give birth to the Son of God in my time and in my culture? We are all meant to be mothers of God.”

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years. Here's how you may give online: <https://onrealm.org/CatonsvillePres/give/ChristmasJoy>



BLUE CHRISTMAS Tuesday, December 20 at 7:30 p.m.

The holidays often carry joy mixed with sadness. We know that the past year has been difficult for many. Grief, loss, and sadness seem to be around every corner - loss of a loved one, loss of a job, loss of health, anxiety about the future. Maybe the holidays are always difficult for you, or maybe you're just not feeling very jolly this year.

Join us for music, remembrance, and time for reflection. Our Blue Christmas service, near the longest night of the year, will be a space to hold and honor our sadness, sorrow, and grief, remember that we're not alone, and find God's light shining in the darkness.

Tuesday, December 20 at 7:30 p.m., in person or online. Together, we are bearing witness to the light of Christ.



ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Activities and Worship Services

Advent I (November 27): Worship at 10:30 a.m.

Advent II (December 4): Adult Education at 9 a.m., Worship at 10:30 a.m., Seafarer Gifts, and Advent Gathering

Advent III (December 11): Worship at 10:30 a.m., McKim Gifts, Book Fair and Second Sunday Church School

Advent IV (December 18): Adult Education at 9 a.m., Worship at 10:30 a.m. and Cocoa and Carols at 7 p.m.

ADVENT GATHERING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

Everyone's invited to fellowship hour right after worship for an all-church Advent Gathering. There'll be crafts and service projects for all ages including candy cane reindeer for the residents of the Westside Shelter, and the assembling of the Seafarer Christmas gifts. No reservations will be required. Come and join us as we welcome the season together.

COCOA AND CAROLS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18 at 7 P.M.

Come and sing your favorite carols and enjoy some hot chocolate at this outdoor holiday event. Join the Catonsville Presbyterian Church congregation and neighboring community for Christmas carols and delicious cocoa at 7 p.m. We'll meet outside the Beechwood/Tower door and share songs of the season. No reservations will be required.

BLUE CHRISTMAS TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20 at 7:30 P.M.

For those who have experienced loss, the holidays can be a particularly painful time, stirring up grief in acute ways. As a result, churches around the world have adopted the practice of having a "Blue Christmas" or a "Longest Night" service during the Advent season. In the Northern hemisphere, this service is the Winter Solstice, which is the longest night of the year.

Our Blue Christmas service is designed to provide space for prayer, reflection, and remembrance amidst the holiday hustle and bustle. In this season of life, grief and loss are magnified and nearly universal, making a service like this needed now more than ever. Join us in the sanctuary (or online) on Tuesday, December 20 at 7:30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24 at 4 P.M. AND 8 P.M.

Join us at 4 p.m. for this always-wonderful interactive and intergenerational worship service. Then in the evening at 8 p.m., come for a joyous service of wonder and light. "All is calm, all is bright." Join us in the sanctuary (or online) on Saturday, December 24.

CHRISTMAS DAY SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25 at 10:30 A.M.

Join us at 10:30 a.m. on Christmas Day for morning worship and carol singing.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

You are invited to contribute to the Flower Fund, which provides poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary during Advent and Christmas. You may donate as you desire and designate your contribution in honor of or in memory of loved ones. All poinsettias will be delivered to those who are homebound. Send a check payable to CPC with "Flower Fund" on the memo line and be sure to indicate the name(s) of those being remembered or honored. You can email this information to office@catonsvillepres.org. You may also contribute online, be sure to leave the name of the memorial/honoree in the memo section. Gifts will be received through mid-December.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Christian Education News

By Dorothy Boulton

ADVENT GATHERING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

Everyone's invited to fellowship hour right after worship for an all-church Advent Gathering with crafts.

SECOND SUNDAY SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

Childcare for infants through age five will be from 10 a.m. to noon in the Owls Room. Multiage church school for K–5th grade meets in the Giraffe Room right after the children's message till the end of worship at approximately from 10:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Cocoa and Conversations for middle school and high school meet in the youth rooms from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

YOUTH GATHERING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11 AT 6 P.M.

Middle and high school youth will gather back at the church from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. for an Advent dinner and Christmas-themed activities. RSVP at jenhutton2010@gmail.com by December 7th.

COCOA AND CAROLS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18 AT 7 P.M.

Everyone is invited—all ages, friends, the Catonsville community—to an afternoon of singing on Sunday, December 12. We'll provide the cocoa and the songbooks.

CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY SERVICE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24 AT 4 P.M.

Opportunities for youth musicians to volunteer! We would love to have our youth musicians share their gifts in worship. To participate please contact Dorothy Boulton at dboulton@catonsvillepres.org by Saturday, December 11. The Family Service will be at 4 p.m. and the Candlelight Service will be at 8 p.m. In addition, please see the invitation for kindergarten through fifth graders to join the Children's Choir. Rehearsals are after worship from 11:40 to noon on December 11 and 18 in the choir room.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

By Wendy Johnston

All children Kindergarten through 5th grade are invited to sing in a children's choir for our 4 p.m. Christmas Eve service. There will be two rehearsals only. Both rehearsals will be held after worship in the Choir Room, on December 11th and 18th from 11:40 a.m. to 12 p.m. Come sing and enjoy some cookies afterwards! Rehearsal will be led by Wendy Johnston, assistant director of music and organist. For more information, contact Wendy at wjohnston@catonsvillepres.org.

MCKIM GIFTS

By Dorothy Boulton

Want to help make a child's season bright? We are collecting new, unwrapped gifts for the children of the McKim Community Center in East Baltimore for their annual holiday party. Please bring a gift suitable for a child or youth (ex: craft kit, board game, sports equipment) and place it under the tree in the sanctuary by December 11th.

YOUTH CORNER

By Jennifer Hutton

This newsletter we want to highlight some of our sophomores including Matt Gunderson, Emma Gunderson, Kathryn Jones, David LoPresti, and Dylan Walther.

Matthew Gunderson attends Mount Saint Joseph High School. He plays volleyball and baseball for the school and club teams. His other interests are basketball, weight lifting and sailing. You may see him working as a busboy at Matthew's 1600 restaurant.

Emma Gunderson attends Catonsville High School. Art, English and Juvenile Justice are her favorite classes. She enjoys dancing (jazz, tap and ballet) and art in her spare time. She also helps teach dance and art classes to little ones. On weekends she works for a florist at weddings and also babysits.

Kate Jones attends Howard High School. She is very active in Howard County's Young Life and works at The Crazy Mason in OEC and Merriweather Post. She plays Varsity field hockey, lacrosse, and runs indoor track. Kate started babysitting daily for a family during Covid and loves spending her money on shopping. Kate spends most of her free time hanging out with friends, hiking, and skiing, and is also looking forward to getting her license!

David LoPresti attends Howard High School. He is in the JROTC where he participates on the Color Guard and Academic teams. David has taken up golf this year and joined the ski team. He has an interest in cars, military vehicles, and war history. He enjoys going to the gym, airsoft and video games with his friends, and occasionally you still might find him with a massive Star Wars lego set. At this time, he expects to pursue engineering in college.

Dylan Walther attends Gilman School. He plays soccer, baseball, and Chess.



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

By David Hutton

The Session is a body of fifteen members, elected by the Congregation and ordained as ruling elders, who provide leadership for our congregation. Following are highlights from the Session meeting on November 2, 2022.

- Stewardship Commitment Sunday was on November 20, 2022, when congregation members' pledges were received during worship.
- The Finance Committee reported that the operating budget deficit has been reduced by approximately \$20,000, and a balanced budget can be expected by the end of the year if members fulfill their pledges. The budgeting process for 2023 has begun, so committee chairs and others responsible for budget accounts should submit their 2023 budget requests to the Finance Committee as soon as possible.
- The Session elected Ruling Elder Mark Kennedy to be our Commissioner to the Gathering of Baltimore Presbytery on November 12, 2022. Votes on amendments to the Book of Order are expected to take place at the gathering.
- The Christian Education Committee is coordinating an Advent Gathering with activities for all, following worship on Sunday, December 4, 2022.
- The Mission Committee is in discussions with First Presbyterian Church of Bel Air, Maryland about supporting a refugee family. More information will be forthcoming as it becomes available.

Session recognizes the need to continually communicate with our membership, and we welcome your suggestions for communication exchange. Session member contact information is listed in the Church Directory and on the website, so it is easy to communicate directly with your church leaders. Take a few minutes to send a message to a Session member, the pastors or the church office, and let us know what you think. We want to hear from you!

SANCTUARY HOLIDAY POINSETTIAS

By Susan Hutton

As in years past the sanctuary will be decorated for Advent and Christmas. You are invited to make donations to the fund which help make this possible. Your donation can be in memory or in honor of those you care about and their names will be listed in the Sunday worship bulletin. All contributions in any amount are welcome. [Please fill out the form attached](#) and (1) place in the Offering Plate on Sunday (2) deliver it to the church office or (3) mail to Catonsville Presbyterian Church. For more information contact Susan Hutton at dhutt@erols.com. Thank you for your contribution.

FALL 2022 ENVISION FUND UPDATES

By Michelle White

Each year, the Envision Board awards grants from the Envision Fund to serve as seed money for projects that will enrich the ministry and life of the church. The mission of the Envision Fund is to extend the church's mission and ministry beyond the day-to-day life of the congregation, and does so by awarding grants for Development, Service in Community, and Social Justice Advocacy. These projects serve a wide variety of people, from within the congregation here at Catonsville Presbyterian Church (CPC) and to local, national, and international communities.

SPRING 2023 GRANT CYCLE ANNOUNCEMENT

The Envision Board would like to announce the upcoming 2023 grant opportunity. The Spring 2023 grant cycle deadline is set for Wednesday, March 1, 2023. Projects may serve the Catonsville Presbyterian Church (CPC) (internal), Local, National, and/or International communities and must meet one of the categories of Development, Service in Community, and Social Justice Advocacy. The total amount available for grant funding has not yet been announced.

As a reminder, external applicants must have a church-based sponsor, and internal applicants must work with an applicable Committee of the church that best aligns with the project. Applications, Proposal Criteria, Sponsorship Forms and contact information may be found at <https://catonsvillepres.org/envision-fund/>. For any questions and/or to be connected to a Committee who may provide appropriate sponsorship, please contact envision_fund@catonsvillepres.org.

GRANT UPDATES

This fall, the Envision Board received a grant report from Living in Recovery's Smiling in Recovery's program. Smiling in Recovery was funded with a \$10,000 grant by the Envision Fund in fall 2021 to provide persons who were recovering from alcoholism and/or substance use disorders with dental implants and other services. The program reported they provided dental reconstruction to two persons and one with urgent dental care and established an urgent dental care fund for other residents in the program. The program also assists incoming residents with enrolling in dental insurance through the MD Health Exchange and others with researching insurance options.

The Envision Board is grateful to God for the life and witness of Robert Riley, whose generous bequest to CPC was used to establish the Envision Fund, as well as the support of Session (especially the Finance Committee), the congregation, and our church office staff who make these awards possible.

ALWAYS READING BOOK FAIR

Sunday, December 11 in Fellowship Hall

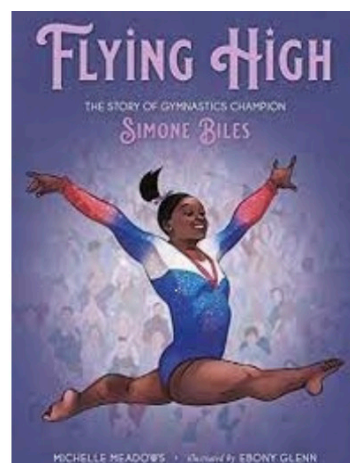
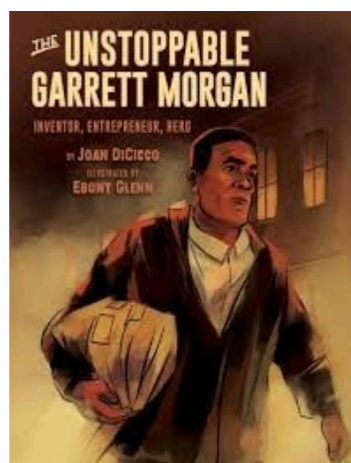
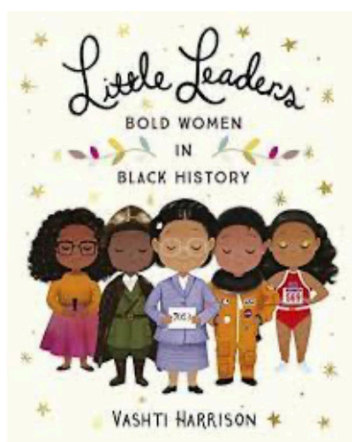
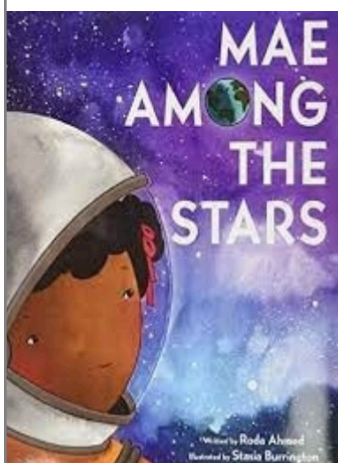
By Nancy Henderson

On Sunday, December 11 we will have 40 books once again on display in Fellowship Hall to either be adopted for Edmondson Heights Elementary School or purchased for your own children's library or a gift for someone special. A donation of any amount, will go to Always Reading to purchase books to replenish the book shelves at Edmondson Heights Elementary School, or you can order from this collection, as many books as you would like.

If you are unable to be in Fellowship Hall you may currently browse online at <https://catonsvillepres.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Book-list-for-Always-Reading.pdf> and donate or purchase the books online at <https://onrealm.org/CatonsvillePres/-/form/give/AlwaysReading>. All books will be delivered to CPC and may be pick up in Fellowship Hall on Sundays after worship or in special situations delivery can be arranged to your home.

The Dismantling Racism Committee of Catonsville Presbyterian Church, Grace AME Church and The Christian Temple are hosting a traveling book fair to support Always Reading. Always Reading is a nonprofit organization with a mission to empower children with an abundance of knowledge through books, with their Achieving Through Reading Program. They fulfill their mission by distributing free, new and specially curated books to hundreds of children attending Title I schools in the Baltimore area. From designated book shelves, children are encouraged to select a book, take it home, and build and expand their home libraries. No other nonprofit does what they do, the way they do it.

Please browse, purchase or donate books for children who might not otherwise have access to books that portray a positive reflection of themselves and expose them to the rich history of their culture. If you have questions or need any assistance please contact Nancy Henderson at henderrath1@verizon.net or 410-788-5414. Thank you from the Dismantling Racism Committee!



STEPHEN MINISTERS

By Charre Symms

On Sunday, November 13, 2022, Catonsville Presbyterian Church commissioned its first group of Stephen Ministers to provide encouragement and support to individuals in our church and community facing difficult circumstances in their lives. Pastors Dorothy Boulton and Kenneth Kovacs offered the commissioning questions and a prayer for the Stephen Ministers, and Tom Enokian, Moderator of the Board of Deacons, led the congregation in its affirmation of support. The Stephen Ministers commissioned are Susan Jaeger, Wendy Kronmiller, Sharon Oaks, Connie Renner, Reid Spearman, and Charre Symms. Following the inspiring service, the Stephen Ministers hosted a fellowship hour where they were warmly greeted by the church members and friends.

The Stephen Ministers and Stephen Leaders want to sincerely thank the Pastors, Board of Deacons, Session, and the church at large for their on-going support for this new ministry. If you or someone you know might benefit from the service of a Stephen Minister, please reach out to one of the Stephen Leaders or Stephen Ministers. You can find more information about Stephen Ministry on the CPC website and at StephenMinistries.org. Stephen Leaders include Dorothy Boulton at dboulton@catonsvillepres.org, Reid Spearman at spareid@gmail.com and Charre Symms at csymms@sbcglobal.net



CPC COMMUNITY RESOURCE HANDBOOK

The CPC Stephen Ministers are coordinating a Community Resource Handbook. The Handbook will be available to church members and friends as a source of referrals in areas including the following: Educational or vocational assistance, Mental Health Care/counseling, End of life/hospice support, Housing and transportation assistance, Low or reduced cost legal services or medical care.

While Baltimore County and other publicly available resources have some of the information we need, there is no substitute for your personal knowledge and referrals. If you would like to recommend a specific local resource to include, please contact Wendy Kronmiller at wkronmiller@gmail.com or 443-930-3141, or Susan Jaeger at susan.jaeger7@gmail.com or 443-562-2310. Thank you so much for your help!

THANKSGIVING DRIVE

By Jennifer Hutton

The deacons and the Mission Committee are pleased to report another successful year partnering with Grace AME church for their annual Thanksgiving giveaway. CPC raised over \$2400 in funds for the "Adopt a Turkey." Many donations from both the Friday Night Food Collection and in worship giving were a big contribution to the drive. And many folks volunteered in several ways to make this possible. 242 families received a meal, a turkey and all the trimmings. The missionaries at Grace AME would like to send their sincerest thanks to you to all! Because of your generosity, they will be able to use the extra funds to support the pantry through the winter months.



SCOUT NEWS

By Glenda K. Johnson

The annual Christmas tree sale, sponsored by Scout Troop 306, has now begun and will continue until all the freshly cut trees are sold. A variety of tree types and sizes are for sale. Hours for the tree sales are on Saturdays (9 a.m.-9 p.m.), Sundays (noon-8 p.m.), Mondays—Thursdays (5 p.m.-8 p.m.), Fridays (5 p.m.-9 p.m.). Help will be available to bag your tree and load it onto your vehicle, as needed. As a new feature, Cub Scout Pack 306 will sell a variety of prepackaged "home-made goodies" during the weekend tree sales. Thanks for your support of this major fund raiser for our Scout groups.



Life in Community

We are sad to share that George Ellers (1920-2022) died on November 21. He was 102.

Our sympathy also goes out to the Elliott family. Diane Roby Elliott died on November 12.

2023 Pledge Update

As of November 22, we have received 63 pledges totaling \$273,162. If you already submitted a pledge, thank you! If not, we invite you submit your pledge by December 15. You may leave your pledge in the offering plate on Sundays or mail it to the church office. You may also use our online Pledge Form at www.catonsvillepres.org. Thank you for your continued support of this ministry!

Our Financial Resources

We rely on everyone to support what God is doing through this congregation. The vitality of this ministry is secured by God's grace and funded by the faithfulness and commitment of God's people. We are counting on the ongoing generosity of our members and friends

■ Income as of Nov. 19, 2022	\$ 643,094
■ Expense as of Nov. 19, 2022	\$-648,455
■ Total:	\$ -5,361

The Messenger Our Mission

We seek to find and share God's calling for this community of faith through worship, fellowship and service.

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Twitter.com/catonsvillepres
www.instagram.com/catonsvillepres
Church Office Hours:
Tuesday-Friday 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
office@catonsvillepres.org

**We Choose
Welcome**

