



# THE RUNNER

Isaiah 52:7

The First United Presbyterian Church of Crafton Heights

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Most of us, most of the time, have a way of doing things that works for us. Maybe you're the kind of person who goes into the same diner and has "the usual"; maybe you have a set of "Sunday clothes" and your "regular" outfits; you probably have your "normal" ways of getting to and from school and work that allow you to navigate the route without expending too much time and energy wondering if you're doing it right.

"Regular". "Normal". "Routine". Those are words that work for most of us, most of the time.

Of course, what is "normal" changes all the time – but often it is imperceptibly slow. I thought of this last month when, in response to a query from my sister, I posted a couple of pictures from our family's celebration of Christmas in 1963. There I was, in all of my black-and-white glory, bouncing on my dad's knee. While I expected some level of teasing from my friends, I was caught off-guard by one who noted, "Wow – how long has it been since fathers got up and put on ties for Christmas morning photos!" And it struck me – in 1963, that was a perfectly normal thing to do. I would suspect that very few of my readers engaged in that level of haberdashery this recent Yule.

And sometimes, our "normal" changes in a flash. There's a rush to the Emergency Room, a marriage proposal, or a job loss. Everything that we thought we could count on has been rearranged in a heartbeat.

For many weeks, some of us have been building up to what we'd hoped to be "the best Christmas ever", or "an old-fashioned Christmas". Others have been hoping just to get through without being overwhelmed by the memories of Christmases past. In either case, we've dealt with *expectations*.

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As the calendar turns to January, we find ourselves inserted into the part of the Christmas story that is the most highly irregular: the Epiphany visit of the Magi to the Christ Child. Learned outsiders, bearing gifts of great value, seeking to honor a new king... only to find themselves shuffling about, somewhat surprised, in the presence of a simple workman and his family in Spartan surroundings. Even more troubling, the visit of the Wise Men would soon turn the Holy Family into refugees, forced to flee the rage of a jealous king. *Nobody* saw this coming.

And yet, God was in the midst of it. God heard the cries of the mothers in Bethlehem; God guided the Magi to their homes; God protected the infant Jesus and his family in their sojourn in Egypt. I can't imagine anyone was happy about much of that, but that's how it was.

As we enter into a new year, may we know that even as the "normal" twists and turns – or simply explodes before our eyes – the purposes of God do not shift. Celebrate that truth with your family of faith as we engage in worship on January 7 with the sacrament of Communion. Move into that in new ways by enlarging your capacity for study or fellowship with a circle of friends or a Faithbuilders group. Look for ways that you can interrupt someone else's "normal" by volunteering to accompany them someplace that is scary or difficult.

And keep looking for the light that shines – it shines on Epiphany and it shines every day. Seek to walk in it, and to reflect it. I'll look for you in worship!

Pastor Dave

# January Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b> Happy New Year Office Closed	<b>2</b> 8:30 am Staff Meeting 10:00 am Womens Gps 7:30 Preschool Board 7:30 pm Dartball @ CHUP (Legion)	<b>3</b> 9:00 am Exercise	<b>4</b> 6:30 pm Steering Committee	<b>5</b> 9:00 am Exercise	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> 9:30 am Faithbuilders 11:00 am Worship 12:15 pm Church Un- Decorating 7:00 pm Youth Group	<b>8</b> 9:00 am Exercise 7:00 pm Deacons	<b>9</b> 10:00 am Womens Gps 7:30 pm Dartball @ Legion The Table	<b>10</b> 9:00 am Exercise 6-8 pm Texas Team Fundraiser @ bd Mongolian Grill	<b>11</b> 5:30 pm Kids of Steel Sign Ups 5:30-7 pm WQED Pilot Program 7-9 pm New Officer Training	<b>12</b> 9:00 am Exercise	<b>13</b> Open Door Leadership Retreat
<b>14</b> 9:30 am Faithbuilders 11:00 am Worship 7:00 pm Youth Group	<b>15</b> 9:00 am Exercise	<b>16</b> 8:30 am Staff Meeting 10:00 am Womens Gps 7:30 pm Dartball @ CHUP (Sh Meth)	<b>17</b> 9:00 am Exercise 6:30 pm Kids of Steel Kick Off 7:00 pm Session Meeting	<b>18</b> 5:30-7 pm WQED Pilot Program	<b>19</b> 9:00 am Exercise	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> 9:30 am Faithbuilders 11:00 am Worship 12:15 pm CHUP Ministry Fair 7:00 pm Youth Group	<b>22</b> 9:00 am Exercise	<b>23</b> 10:00 am Womens Gps 7:30 pm Dartball @ Sh Meth	<b>24</b> 9:00 am Exercise	<b>25</b> 5:30-7 pm WQED Pilot Program	<b>26</b> 9:00 am Exercise 7-9 pm Leadership Retreat	<b>27</b> 8:30-3:30 Leadership Retreat
<b>28</b> 9:30 am Faithbuilders 11:00 am Worship 7:00 pm Youth Group	<b>29</b> 9:00 am Exercise	<b>30</b> 10:00 am Womens Gps 7:30 pm Dartball @ CHUP (TLC II)	<b>31</b> 9:00 am Exercise			

# Meetings & News

## Session

January 17th

7:00 pm

## Deacons

January 8th

7:00 pm

## Steering Committee

January 4th

6:30 pm

## Preschool Board

January 2nd

7:30 pm

## CHUP

Ministry Fair

January 21st

12:15 pm

## Behind the scenes at CHUP

Elders, Deacons, Childcare, Tellers and Committees: ever wonder what *"They"* do? Collecting Offerings, Dinners, Communion, Cutting Grass, Paying Bills: ever wonder how *"That"* gets done?

Most of what and how *"We"* do things at CHUP is by committee members and a few volunteers. We need more people to get involved. The need is great, the laborers are few.

In Fellowship Hall, on **Sunday January 21** we will hold a CHUP Ministry Fair following the worship service. We will have information on the various ministry groups, committees and leadership roles we have at CHUP. This is an opportunity to see how you can become a vital part of a ministry that is near and dear to your heart. A ministry that might peak your interest and encourage you to learn more and find out how *"You"* can make a difference.

Light refreshments will be served. Hosted by Congregational Life.

## New Officers and Leadership Retreat

A training session for New Officers will be offered on Thursday, **January 11, from 7-9 pm.**

All Elders, Deacons, and those leading ministries at CHUP (including New Officers) are encouraged to attend this year's annual Leadership Retreat. We will gather in Fellowship Hall from 7-9 on Friday, January 26, and again from 8:30- 3:30 on Saturday, January 27. This is a chance for the leaders of this church to deepen their commitment to their individual ministries, as well as find support and comradery in their fellow servants of our Lord.

## Annual Meeting and Reports

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will take place immediately following Worship on **February 4, 2017**. A soup luncheon will be served. Anyone may attend as we review the life of our Congregation in 2017. All heads of committees are asked to turn their Annual Reports in to the church office no later than Sunday, January 28.

## Advent Un-Decorating

On **January 7**, we will need a few folks to stay for a short time after Worship to help us un-decorate the sanctuary and pack up the Christmas items for storage. We especially need a few men to help take down the tree, but there are many small jobs to do. Many hands make light work, so please consider staying to help!

## From Lauren Mack—Advent in Malawi

Realizing that I won't be home for this holiday season has been hard at times. No matter where I have worked or lived, I have been with my family for every Thanksgiving, and have never spent a Christmas away from home. In this season of Advent there are some hard moments; but overall the positive moments have been outweighing the negative.

I Love Advent. I love the time the church spends preparing for Christ's birth. I love Christmas hymns and I love the smell of cookies and shopping for gifts. But this year, I am in a new place, and preparations are a little different.

Brooke and I made an Advent wreath and have been enjoying a daily advent devotional. While sitting around our homemade wreath, (candles colored with sharpies stuck in a box with tea leaves wrapped around the bit) our friend Charles stopped by and noticed our center piece and asked what it was about. After sharing how we celebrate Advent, he taught us a little bit about how Malawians prepare for Christmas. A lot of times employers here will pay their employees a few days before Christmas Day. Malawians will do some shopping a few days before, not necessarily for presents, but for food and other necessities. Instead of going to church on Christmas Eve, worship is attended on Christmas Day.



Even though I miss my family, we have friends here who care for us as if we are their family. This holiday season is different and difficult, but it is my prayer that I learn how to wait. I hope that this season in a new place is molding me to embrace this season of Advent and Christmas for what it is truly meant to be.

Thank you for holding me in your thoughts and prayers,

*Lauren*

The CHUP Adult Mission Team invites you to be a part of a fundraising event for their upcoming trip to Houston Texas where they will be taking part in Hurricane Harvey relief work.

The event will be held on Wednesday January 10 from 6:00 to 9:00 pm at bd's Mongolian Grill. 428 S 27th St. (Southside Works - across from the Cheesecake Factory)

A \$30 ticket will get you unlimited barbeque stir-fry, soup salad and soft drink. It even includes the gratuity. Tickets can be purchased ahead of time from any Mission Team member, or bought at the door at the event. Call Gabe Kish @ 412-922-1950 for more info.

Please come join us, have a great meal and help us to participate in the good work that God is doing in Houston.





# Preschool News



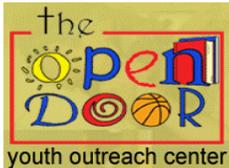
In December, the children loved hearing the story of the birth of Jesus. They loved the nativity pieces they could play with & dressing up in costume as they re-told the story to each other. They had a lot of questions about Gabriel the angel, the shepherds and their sheep, and why was Jesus in a manger with hay. We love sharing the story of the "First Christmas" with the kids as they begin to understand what Christmas is truly about.



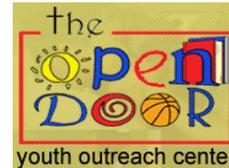
In January we will learn about winter weather and winter animals. We'll explore all things frozen and snowy. We'll learn how blubber keeps animals warm and learn how we need to dress for the cold weather.



Order Hoagies to help make your busy life easier! choice of 12" Italian or Turkey made fresh by our friends at North Shore Deli Cost \$6 Hoagie orders due January 17  
Pick up Jan 23



# The Open Door



**Thank you** to the many people who helped us to share Christmas with our community. We had approximately 150 people at our Christmas party on December 15. Special thanks to Jessica Simcox, Mollie Sam, Pauline Bodnar, Linda Pearson, and Joe Orbovich--without your efforts, none of this would have been possible!



The Open Door is grateful to have received a **challenge grant for \$25,000!** Every dollar you donate between now and May 31 will be 100% matched until we reach our goal. Checks or cash can be made out to The Open Door, or you can go to [www.opendoorpg.org](http://www.opendoorpg.org) to donate on-line. Questions? Email [Kristen@opendoorpg.org](mailto:Kristen@opendoorpg.org)



**If you'd like to receive weekly updates and prayer requests** for The Open Door from Kristen, simply send an email to [Kristen@opendoorpg.org](mailto:Kristen@opendoorpg.org), and she'll add you to the list! E-mails are also posted each week on the bulletin board outside of the church office.

**Coming In January:**  
 1/7: YG resumes  
 1/8: After School resumes  
 1/9: Girls' Group resumes  
 1/11: Kids of Steel Sign-Up Night  
 1/12: FNR resumes  
 1/13: Steering Committee Retreat  
 1/15: MLK (No Programs)  
 1/17: Kids of Steel kick-off  
 1/22: PPS In-Service (No AS)



## KIDS OF STEEL PARENT INFORMATION & SIGN UP NIGHT

**Thursday, January 11 @ 5:30 pm in Fellowship Hall**  
 Parents come on out and bring the kids from **1st grade - 5th grade** to sign up night for Kids of Steel Program! Have your kids learn about the fundamentals of running, exercise and healthy eating habits. Program will run weekly every Wednesday night from 6:30 - 7:30 at the Open Door.

**PROGRAM BEGINS: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17**  
 Any questions please contact  
 Michele Kish @ 412-922-1950 or [mooocow1203@yahoo.com](mailto:mooocow1203@yahoo.com) or  
 Jessica Simcox @ 412-417-3732 or [jsimcox5@gmail.com](mailto:jsimcox5@gmail.com)



# Prayers, Concerns and Joys

## Prayer Concerns

**Members:** Lynn Langford, Don & Clare Weaver, Declan Adler, Petagno Family, Donna Szafranski, Bonnie Schrenker, Florence Hall, Deb Jacob, Tina Dame, Ed Kososki, Dolly Bock, Linnea Kunicky, Maryanne Richardson, Cheryl Reed, Joey Szumigalski & family, Justin & Eric Barth, Lauren Mack in Malawi, Joe Connor in the Military, the homebound and those in caring facilities.

**Friends & Relatives:** Ellie Musolino, Maciulewski Family, Andrew Bowers, Elizabeth Shrader, Ross Family, Rita Imhoff, Lisa & Nicholas Daugherty, Lorraine Barth, Duane Eagan, Eadie Children, Gary Rivit, Betty Hartlep, Krieger family, Mark Mattern, Elijah Todd, Harold Garrison.

- Please keep our Elder and Deacon Leadership in your prayers, giving thanks for those who have served in the last year, and asking guidance for those who are beginning their service to God's people in this place.
- Please pray for the Families, Volunteers, and Staff of the Open Door, that God may shine His light into this community through their participation in this ministry.
- Please pray for the Families and Staff of the Crafton Heights Community Preschool, that God's love may be evident in the educational foundation they are building together.
- Please pray for the CHUP Staff, that God may clearly guide and bless their work for His people here.
- Please pray for the Volunteers who diligently offer their time to bring the Kingdom near, giving thanks for their efforts and asking God to multiply the fruits of their labors.
- Please pray to God to help you discern your calling in ministry here at CHUP, in this community, and in this world in the coming year.

## January Birthdays

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Daniel Miller  
Kathy Speirs
- 4<sup>th</sup> Kate Lyden
- 6<sup>th</sup> Terri Dorman  
Megan Veltman
- 8<sup>th</sup> Cathy Hartzell
- 10<sup>th</sup> Lauren Pearson
- 12<sup>th</sup> Janet Sbraccia
- 14<sup>th</sup> David Barnes
- 16<sup>th</sup> Matt Markus
- 17<sup>th</sup> Marshall Dix
- 18<sup>th</sup> Mary Beth Barnes
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Amy Durkin  
Gwen Miller
- 26<sup>th</sup> Isabella Lane
- 29<sup>th</sup> Aubrey Slotten  
Toni Lynn Russell
- 30<sup>th</sup> William Schneider Jr.
- 31<sup>st</sup> Ron Gielarowski  
Ruth Price

### Sympathy

We extend sympathy to Lynn Langford on the death of her mother, Gloria Leonard, on December 11.

### Congratulations

Congratulations to Adam and Sandi (Blum) Field on the birth of their son, Kane Adam Field, on November 29.

### New Address

Gert Clokey  
Asbury Heights Villas #314  
700 Bower Hill Rd  
Pittsburgh, PA 15243

Articles for the February Runner are due by Sunday, January 21.

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*Worship  
Schedule*  
.....  
Faithbuilders  
for all ages  
9:30 am  
Worship  
11:00 am



January  
2018

*"The Runner"*  
A Monthly Newsletter  
Published by  
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