



The First
United
Presbyterian
Church
of Crafton
Heights

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January 2020

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The Runner

January 2020

All I could think about when preparing to write this piece was the fact that it is going to be 2020. I've wanted to use some sort of vision-related pun. Yes, my life is sad sometimes.

In the USA, 20/20 is the standard for visual acuity. If you have 20/20 vision, you can see at 20 feet what a normally-sighted person can see at 20 feet. If you have 20/40 vision, it means that your vision is worse than average, and you can see at 20 feet what a typical person can see at 40 feet (that's the cut-off in most states for driving your car without corrective lenses, by the way). I understand that after adolescence, most people's distance vision stays about the same, although it may gradually deteriorate due to an affliction such as glaucoma or cataracts.

However, there are those of us who (ahem) find that our *near vision* deteriorates. That's when we need "cheaters" or reading glasses. Our lenses become less flexible, and it's harder to coax our eyes to shift focus from something far away to the menu in front of us. Do you know what that is called?

Presbyopia. I'm not making this up. The word literally means "old eyes". I knew that I had it the day that I took one of the young people on a visit to a nursing home with me. I attempted to read some scripture, but suddenly the same Bible that had been in my glove compartment for years was suddenly illegible. I couldn't make out a word. I tried to fake it by choosing a Psalm that I had memorized, but the resident called my bluff by picking her own scripture, and I had to have my young friend read it to us. The doctors say that if you live long enough, most of you will end up with old eyes. That makes sense. We should all be so blessed.

This month I'd like to share my fear of another diagnosis: Spiritual Presbyopia. It's far more dangerous than simple presbyopia. Spiritual Presbyopia becomes evident when we notice that we have begun to lose track of what is important. How many of us find that our lives are a bit blurry because we're not able to focus on the things that are close to us?

Too often, we get so accustomed to doing things the way we've always done them to notice the fact that the world around us has changed. When I went to the nursing home, I tried to fake my way out of the fact that I couldn't see the words on the page in front of me by calling on my memory. Have you ever reacted, not to the person who is actually in front of you, but to a memory of that person? Have you ever found it easier to simply react to the ways that the world has been before, rather than take the time to really look at what is happening today? I thought so. Presbyopia is pretty common.

According to the Pew Research Center, the percentage of US adults who, in 2018-2019 identified as

	<i>Christian</i>	<i>Other Faiths</i>	<i>Unaffiliated</i>
Silent Generation (b. 1928-1945)	84%	4%	12%
Baby Boomers (b. 1946-1964)	76%	6%	18%
Generation X (b. 1965-1980)	67%	6%	27%
Millennials (b. 1981-1996)	49%	9%	42%

Now I'm going to be honest. I don't really think that God stays up at night lamenting the fact that there are fewer Presbyterians now than there were fifty years ago. I'm not in the business of producing or protecting Presbyterians. But I long to live in a world where more and more people are conscious of the love in which they were created and for which they are destined. I long to live in a world wherein more people act like Jesus, and fewer like Herod. Doing the same things we've always done, in the same way, for the same reasons – does not appear to be a particularly effective strategy at reaching the next generation (says the guy sending a printed newsletter via snail-mail...) And so I wake up each morning trying to be present to the world and the people who are around me now – and not dealing with the shadows or memories of what it was like before I needed bifocals.

The only cure for presbyopia is corrective lenses or surgery. The only cure for Spiritual Presbyopia is a humble heart and a teachable spirit. I have found that one of the best places to get those things is in regular worship and fellowship. May we continue to gather together and encourage such in each other to the end that more and more people may have the ability to see themselves and each other the way that God sees them. I'll look for you (with my bifocals!) in worship!

Pastor Dave

January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 New Years Day Office Closed	2	3 9:00 am Exercise	4
5 Epiphany 9:30 am Faithbuilders 11:00 am Worship -- Communion 12:15 pm Advent Un-decorating	6 9:00 am Exercise	7 10:00 am Women's Grp 7:30 pm Dartball @ CHUP 7:30 pm Preschool Board	8 9:00 am Exercise	9	10 9:00 am Exercise	11
12 9:30 am Faithbuilders 11:00 am Worship -- New Officers Installed 5:00 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Youth Group	13 9:00 am Exercise 6:30 pm Deacons	14 10:00 am Women's Grp 7:30 pm Dartball @ Legion The Table	15 9:00 am Exercise 5:45 pm Session Dinner 6:30 pm Sess Worship 7:00 pm Session Mtg	16	17 9:00 am Exercise	18
19 9:30 am Faithbuilders 11:00 am Worship 7:00 pm Youth Group	20 MLK Day Office Closed	21 10:00 am Women's Grp 7:30 pm Dartball @ CHUP	22 9:00 am Exercise	23	24 9:00 am Exercise	25
26 9:30 am Faithbuilders 11:00 am Worship 5:00 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Youth Group	27 9:00 am Exercise	28 10:00 am Women's Grp 7:30 pm Dartball @ CHUP	29 9:00 am Exercise	30	31 9:00 am Exercise Youth Group 30 Hour Famine	

Meetings

Session

January 15

5:45 pm Dinner

6:30 pm Worship

7:00 pm Meeting

Deacons

January 13

6:30 pm

Preschool Board

January 7

7:30 pm

Annual Reports

Due

January 31

News

Advent Un-Decorating

Immediately following Worship on **January 5**, we will take down the Christmas decorations in the Sanctuary. Many hands make light work! Please consider staying to help.

Ladies' Bible Study

Join us for coffee, tea and conversation beginning Tuesday, **January 7** at 10:00. We will be talking about Jeremiah with a study called "Daring to Hope in an Unstable World". Each lesson includes a short video, time for discussion, and prayer. We hope you will join us in Fellowship Hall - bring a friend!

Welcoming New Members

On December 22, we welcomed **Catherine (Kitty) Kistler** and **Bridget Wolbert** as the newest Covenant Members to our congregation. We celebrate their presence with us and look forward to shared ministry with them.

Connector Ministry

The Connector ministry is one in which members of the congregation look out for and care for 4 or 5 other members of the congregation. They look for them each Sunday in church. If one of the people they have on their list is missing for several Sundays, the Connector might give them a call. Some Connectors like to send cards to their people on holidays or special occasions. Others like to invite the folks on their list to come to special church events.

The only requirements to become a Connector are that you come to worship regularly and promise to watch out for and pray for the people on your list.

Please pray about joining this vital ministry. If you would like more information, please speak to Barbara Prevost 412-922-8240.

Congregational Life

Congregational Life is a committee that provides opportunities for congregational fellowship. The committee also provides food for special congregational gatherings. If you have an interest in joining this group please speak to Joann Mikula 412-344-3335 or Cheri Mack 412-200-2958.

Preschool



The thanks-giving continued through December. Thanks to the generosity of Joe & Danielle Orbovich and their friends, five families with a total of 13 children received Christmas gifts. Joe and Danielle considered each child's age and gender and thoughtfully put together boxes of presents for the families. We wanted the gift pick up time to be special, so we provided pizza and drinks and had casual conversations with each family and their children.



The Deacons also provided each family with a Giant Eagle gift card this Christmas, and the Crafton – Ingram Rotary had provided these families with food boxes for Thanksgiving. The families were overjoyed and very thankful for the love and support shown to them this season.



Preschool provides a quality education to every child in our program. We currently have 8 families receiving additional tuition assistance beyond our low \$90 monthly cost. Thank you to all who give regularly to preschool using the monthly envelopes, thank you those who give occasionally and thank you to every person who purchases our hoagies each month. We have 2 anonymous supporters helping families with additional tuition assistance.

Thank you!



Our **big fundraiser** will start January 16. You will have a chance to win a 3 day vacation for 2 ! (Destination of your choice, a \$2,200 value.) Raffle tickets will cost \$10 each. Please see Cheri Mack to purchase!

The PK children loved dressing up and retelling the First Christmas Story. They anxiously took turns playing each part: Mary, Joseph and the donkey walking to Bethlehem, shepherds and sheep getting to the stable first, the wise men carrying gifts.

Prayers, Joys & Concerns

Stewardship

My name is Sarah Claassen and I'm a newer member of this church, I attend with my little toddler Judah. I was asked to share a little bit about what attracted me to this church and what Stewardship means to me.

Before I came to Crafton, I was a part of a wonderful church that sadly shut down. Thankfully, friends of mine recommended this church to me – and I officially joined because of what I found here. You see, I had been so frustrated with the "church" (in the broader sense) over the last few years because I felt that when it came to social/economic/cultural issues, there was a big gap where I thought the church should be raising their hand and saying "nope - not ok" and actually participating in the conversation. More often than not, it seemed the "church" was staying quiet on issues of injustice because they didn't want to make things political or uncomfortable... which is ironic because I would argue that Jesus was both of those things.

Needless to say, I found like-minded individuals here who were raising their hands saying "nope, not ok!". So, I'm excited to raise my son in a church that talks about the tough stuff and actively wrestles with how we are called to respond to the big themes happening in our world – and then figuring out what that response looks like within our own community.

Now that you know who I am, I'd like to share what stewardship means to me. The way I see it, stewardship is about Mindfulness and Resources. It's the mindful use of our resources to glorify God. And the basic resources we're all individually responsible for are our time, talents, and money. We decide daily how we are going to use those resources. In reality, if you're like me, a lot of those decisions are... on autopilot. So, I want to challenge us today to take a look at our time, our talents, and our finances and take a some of those routine decisions off of autopilot and instead mindfully consider them.

Stewardship isn't a one-time thing. It's not a once-a-year thing to reevaluate at New Year's or Stewardship month. It is continuous - every week, every day, every minute you are making decisions on how to use the resources you've been given. So, take some time to be mindful and prayerful of those decisions and if you are using your resources in the best way... and can you do more? If we are regularly mindful of this, we can learn to make incremental changes frequently – without getting stuck in analysis paralysis of bigger one-time decisions. Whatever that resource is that God is laying on your heart to evaluate – make sure you respond and do something with it. Because that's what we do here at Crafton Heights Presbyterian, and that's why I'm here.

Prayer Concerns

Members: John Fullwood, Linnea Kunicky, Gabe Kish, Fran Andrews, Glenn Mack, Speirs Family, Clare Weaver, Marge Freeman, Barbara Wasner, Eleanor Arlet, Alice Schnellbach, Tina Dame, Maryanne Richardson, Cheryl Reed, Joey Szumigalski & family, Justin & Eric Barth, Joe Connor, the homebound, and those in caring facilities.

Friends & Relatives: Elmer Trunick, Nancee Maciulewski, Frieda Jones, Pauline Whitaker, Tim Murray, Janie Hervert, Laurie Trunick, Ellie Musolino, Lisa & Nicholas Daugherty, Lorraine Barth, Eadie Children, Krieger Family, Mark Mattern, Elijah Todd.

January Birthdays

2 nd	Daniel Miller Kathy Speirs
3 rd	Mary Stacy
4 th	Kate Lyden
6 th	Terri Dorman Megan Veltman
10 th	Lauren Pearson
11 th	Zachariah Lucas
12 th	Janet Sbraccia
14 th	David Barnes
17 th	Marshall Dix
18 th	Mary Beth Barnes
21 st	Arya Jane Connor
23 rd	Amy Durkin
26 th	Isabella Lane
29 th	Liam Klein Aubrey Slotten Toni Lynn Russell
31 st	Ron Gielarowski Ruth Price

Articles for the February Runner are due by Sunday, January 19.

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*Happy
New year*

January
2020

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

"The Runner"
A Monthly Newsletter
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