



The First
United
Presbyterian
Church
of Crafton
Heights

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May 2020

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The Runner

May 2020

Beloved in the Lord,

Typically, these pages are filled with announcements – you can look inside to discover information about programs and plans for the upcoming months, or perhaps read about what you missed in the previous weeks. This month, there's some good and important news to be found. But in terms of what is to come? Well, we don't know. As I write, the church is still locked up and everything is happening online. But this will end, my friends.

We've been here before. In 1918 the "Spanish Flu" was sweeping the nation. In Allegheny County, more than 60,000 people were infected and at least 4,500 succumbed to this disease. First, saloons and other public places were shuttered. Those who attended worship the first weekend in October were greeted with a police sign indicating "any person having a cough or cold is not to enter this church." It was so bad that on October 7, 1918 the Mayor of Pittsburgh issued an order declaring houses of worship closed.

I don't know for sure, but here in Crafton Heights there must have been a high level of anxiety. The congregation had just built a new sanctuary, – and now the members were forbidden to assemble inside! The evening of October 7, 1918, a meeting of Session was held here at CHUP. At that time, the Session passed a motion empowering "Messrs. Christy, Crusan, and Sawhill" to form an emergency committee of Session. These men were endowed with the power to "grant or refuse the church auditorium or church rooms for all meetings of whatever kind...and to state to the persons desiring use of the church the nature of such meetings and the language and etc. that is permissible." Some church buildings were, in fact, used as hospitals or community centers. We do not have a record as to what happened here in our building, but we do know that on October 27 of that year, the elders met at the home of Mr. Sawhill and elected another committee, this one to prepare a letter to the congregation and indicate that each family in the church would be visited by an elder or trustee on the following Sabbath morning in order to receive their offerings. This was not unusual – during that time, several pastors submitted their sermons to the newspaper for publication; one pastor enlisted his Boy Scout Troop to deliver Sunday School lessons to people's homes, and, yes, some protested. Evangelist Billy Sunday began a week-long crusade in the hopes of "praying down" the epidemic, and shook hands with 10,000 people one night. Two days later his services were shut down as even people in the crowds were collapsing from the illness.

Here's my point: a hundred years ago, filled with anxiety about having a new building to use (and pay for) and offered none of the communication conveniences of our own age, we got through something like this. We will get through again. Let us, beloved, commit to being together in whatever way presents itself; although I can promise you that the elders won't be coming door to door for offerings, there is an important word in this newsletter about the need for ongoing support; and while we cannot be together physically, let us look for ways to connect with authenticity and purpose. Please check on your neighbors. Do you know anyone in need of food? Let us know. Are there problems in a home that can be repaired? Again, reach out. We are a family in so many important ways.

May 31 marks the Day of Pentecost. It is the day that we think of as being "the birthday of the church". We ought to be in our sanctuary, celebrating baptism and receiving new members and sharing communion. Maybe we will. But if we can't be, let us remember that the coming of the Spirit, no less than the resurrection of our Lord, is not dependent on our ability to do anything – we live our lives in response to the movement of the Spirit. Let us continue to look for ways to do that, no matter what the circumstances of the present day.

I'll be looking for you...somewhere, somehow...

Pastor Dave

Stewardship

Grace & Peace to you. We wanted to take the time to give an update from the Stewardship team in the midst of the pandemic to let you know some of the actions that the team has taken to support the church, talk a bit about the launch of our new website, and to provide an update on the state of the congregation's finances for the 1st quarter. The Great Ends of the Church in the Book of Order call us to be people who take seriously:

*The proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind
The shelter, nurture and spiritual fellowship of the children of God
The maintenance of divine worship
The preservation of the truth
The promotion of social righteousness
The exhibition of the kingdom of heaven to the world* — Book of Order (2017–19), F-1.0304

Through digital media we have continued worship, hosted the Lenten study, and allowed for the youth group and the girls' group to continue to meet virtually. We've launched the new website (www.chup.org), with a great deal of collaboration between Sarah Classen and DEP technologies. The new design format displays better on mobile, allows for a direct link to Pastor Dave's blog/sermons, and is overall more user-friendly, providing another avenue of engagement for our congregation to the world at large.

Your continued faithfulness to giving during this time has been both gracious and humbling. In the past year we've seen a 338% increase in digital giving. Expenses in the first quarter also came in \$2,225 under budget. While this is encouraging, our income is still 37% under what is needed to break even. In an effort to stabilize our finances during this time the Church, with a great deal of help from Jason Dix, our treasurer, has applied for assistance through the Federal CARES loan program, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and the Board of Pensions. While a three month waiver for dues payments was granted by the Presbyterian Board of Pensions was approved, saving us close to \$5,000, the grant from PDA and the loan from the CARES program were not. Even so, we will continue to live into another section of the book of order:

The church is called to be Christ's faithful evangelist:

1. *going into the world, making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all he has*
2. *demonstrating by the love of its members for one another and by the quality of its common life the new reality in Christ; sharing in worship, fellowship, and nurture, practicing a deepened life of prayer and service under the guidance of the Holy Spirit;*
3. *participating in God's activity in the world through its life for others by:*
 - a. *healing and reconciling and binding up wounds,*
 - b. *ministering to the needs of the poor, the sick, the lonely, and the powerless,*
 - c. *engaging in the struggle to free people from sin, fear, oppression, hunger and injustice,*
 - d. *giving itself and its substance to the service of those who suffer,*
 - e. *sharing with Christ in the establishing of his just, peaceable, and loving rule in the world.*

The Church is called to undertake this mission even at the risk of losing its life, trusting in God alone as the author and giver of life, sharing the gospel, and doing those deeds in the world that point beyond themselves to the new reality in Christ.

Continue, in this time, to let your light shine. Continue to be grace filled, generous, encouraging, and faithful. Be an example of Christ's love for the world, and as John 14:12 (CEB) says:

I assure you that whoever believes in me will do the works that I do. They will do even greater works than these because I am going to the Father.

Yours in Christ,

The Stewardship Team

News

Virtual Gatherings



In an age of social distancing, CHUP has managed to stay connected online. Our Session, Staff, Youth Group and Girls' Group meet via the Zoom platform.

If you would like to connect with CHUP, please visit Pastor Dave's Facebook page to see a livestream of Worship every Sunday. All Worship services are later posted on YouTube: simply google "CHUP worship YouTube" and you will find us!

Have prayer needs? Email prayer@chup.org and everyone on our prayer email list will see your requests. You can also always call the church to have someone contact you.

Shape the Sky Postponed

Friends, as you all are aware, gatherings of large groups of people are still unsafe. We are still committed to the safety of our children using technology and would love to share this information with you, but we will offer this program at a later date. Look for more information in the future, here and on our website, for a reschedule date.



Working Together

Our neighbors at the Attawheed Islamic Center joined others of their faith in observance of Ramadan, the month in which Muslims spend intentional time in fasting and prayer. Just prior to the beginning of that celebration, they called to see if any in our community were experiencing food insecurity. Thanks to the generosity of Attawheed and the work of CHUP members Gabe Kish and Cheri Mack, at least seven families connected with our ministry received dry goods, produce, and meat. If you or anyone you know is in need of assistance with food, please contact the church! While this particular outreach has ended, there are avenues of help!

Food Pantry

Our Food Pantry is still available for those in our congregation or neighborhood who need help at this time. If you would like to donate, we are currently low on supplies of apple juice and cereal. Please call the church if you would like to donate or if you or someone you know could use this service.



Preschool

On behalf of all the preschool staff; we are sad to see the school year come to such an abrupt end in mid-March. The health and safety of our preschool families and staff are most important during this time, but we certainly miss hearing them come up the stairs each school day!

We have stayed connected with families via Facebook and email, where we have created daily activity challenges for the children and a platform for families to share pictures, ideas and challenges with each other during this time of separation.

One of the last things we did as a preschool group was collect donations to adopt a cheetah at the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium. We are excited to support the zoo, now more than ever!

We put together activity packs for each child including a few story books and art supplies that they can use at home. We also distributed class photos during our masked, drive-by pick up. We look forward to the day when we can come together at the park for a celebration of the year.

Because our hoagie sales and mini golf fundraiser were canceled and our tuition was cut short, we will continue to need support via prayers and financial contributions during this time. Please contact Cheri Mack cherischool@comcast.net to find out ways you can help.

We appreciate all everyone has done and will do in the coming months that will enable us to continue to be a viable ministry in the neighborhood. Stay safe, and see you soon!



Articles for the June Runner are due by Sunday, May 17.

Prayers, Joys & Concerns

Prayer Concerns

Members: Erlina Mae Adler, Cheryl Shaw, Kitty Kistler, Eva Neszpaul, Aliza Ciechanowski, Linda Piper, John Fullwood, Linnea Kunicky, Gabe Kish, Glenn Mack, Clare Weaver, Marge Freeman, Barbara Wasner, Eleanor Arlet, Alice Schnelbach, Tina Dame, Maryanne Richardson, Cheryl Reed, Joey Szumigalski & Family, Justin & Eric Barth, Joe Connor, the homebound, and those in caring facilities.

Friends & Relatives: Ron Stacy, Kate Kuhn, Ann Wolbert, Joe Petagno, Dawn Sedlock, Elmer Trunick, Frieda Jones, Pauline Whitaker, Tim Murray, Janie Hervert, Laurie Trunick, Ellie Musolino, Lorraine Barth, Lisa & Nicholas Daugherty, Eadie Children, Krieger Family, Mark Mattern.

May Birthdays

1st Callan McNamara
 4th Jacob Lane
 Dennis Lane
 6th Brian Donovan
 8th Jared Fuhs
 Maisie Kistler
 Brittany Mankie
 Maryanne Richardson
 Marla Harkins
 9th Tara Reed Julian
 11th Mikayla Walker
 12th Erlina Mae Adler
 13th Raymond Schaffer
 15th Lil McConnell
 16th Olive Donovan
 18th Rachael Sam
 21st Brandon Austin
 Trevin Powell
 23rd Becky Kelly
 26th Christina Dame
 27th Callan Schrenker
 28th Tranter Butti
 29th Stephanie Miller
 Wilson



Hello CHUP! My name is Mike Ball, and I am the new executive director of The Open Door! I am excited to be joining the CHUP and Crafton Heights communities. The Open Door represents an approach to youth outreach and engagement that reflects my own commitments to community building, character and moral development, and faith. Throughout my career as an educator, youth pastor, school chaplain, and academic adviser, I have had the opportunity to help young people develop their minds and grow in their faith. I am overjoyed to be able to bring my experience and passion to The Open Door and CHUP.

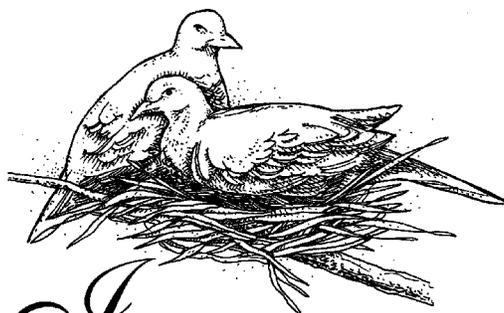
Even as we face the unprecedented challenges presented by the pandemic, I am confident that The Open Door will continue to serve its most vital role as a community of love in this amazing part of Pittsburgh!

As a student of theology, I have always put a high value on engaging with our spiritual tradition as a living, active force in our lives. From my studies at the University of Chicago and Harvard Divinity School, I learned a rigorous approach to Christianity and its theological traditions that I have tried to impart to students here in Pittsburgh—at The Neighborhood Academy, a local private prep school serving lower income students in the East End—and in Los Angeles, where I recently served as Director of Student Ministry at Westwood Presbyterian Church. The variety of my experiences, which also include a stint as a Teach For America Corps Member working in Jackson, Mississippi, has given me a great appreciation for the ways in which the Body of Christ reflects all of humanity. This commitment to diversity, inclusion, and generosity of spirit have become my guiding vocational values, and I sincerely hope that I can continue to guide the physical, intellectual, and spiritual lives of young people in such an exciting and caring environment. Many thanks to this community for welcoming me with such grace and warmth, and I look forward to getting to know all of you much better in the coming weeks and months ahead!

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*I will lie down and
sleep in peace,
for you alone,
O Lord, make
me dwell in safety.*

Psalm 4:8

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2020

Visit us online
www.chup.org

Live worship
streaming on
Pastor Dave's
Facebook page
every Sunday

"The Runner"

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