



The First United  
Presbyterian Church  
of Crafton Heights  
December 2020

# The Runner

Beloved in the Lord,

Oh, how we miss each other! And how you miss a thousand other things about the ways that your life was on March 1. And now we have the awkward task of trying to figure out a way to “do Christmas” in 2020. Give me a break! How can we even think about the Advent wreaths and the carols and the candles on Christmas Eve? I just can’t. I can’t even.

A distracting little ditty that has played in our home in recent years is “An Inconvenient Christmas”, written by Kyle Matthews and recorded by The Oak Ridge Boys. It’s not a distraction in this year of pandemic, but a very helpful reminder! I commend it to you, in the hopes that we can move through this time of the unfortunate while giving thanks for the most inconvenient in hopes of the incarnation.

Among the bills that I'd received was a postcard marked "Apologies,  
The Christmas gifts you ordered aren't in stock."  
So I packed up the kids for Grandpa's house  
Then a blizzard blew in and the car broke down so we shared a quart of eggnog at a truck stop  
And I said, "Kids, this is unfortunate. You think it's bad? Well, it's inconvenient"  
But the most inconvenient Christmas ever  
Was the first one, when God came so far to give himself to us  
So when the stress hits each December, how it helps me to remember  
God is with us most when things just can't get worse!  
The most inconvenient Christmas ever was the first.

By the time we got to Grandpa's house his Christmas lights had burned it down  
So we had to take him home to live with us.  
But he couldn't stand to leave the farm so now there's cattle in our yard,  
Sheep on the rug, pigs in the tub, and a rooster at dawn!  
And I said, "Now honey, this is unfortunate. You think this is bad? Well it's inconvenient"  
But the most inconvenient Christmas ever  
Was the first one, when God came so far to give himself to us  
So when the stress hits each December, how it helps me to remember  
God is with us most when things just can't get worse!  
The most inconvenient Christmas ever was the first.

A young girl expects a child she can't explain  
Forced to walk a hundred miles just to give birth in the hay  
While the king at that same hour, fearing challenge to his power,  
Sent his troops to track them down and wipe them out  
Yep, hands down: The most inconvenient Christmas ever  
Was the first one, when God came so far to give himself to us  
So when the stress hits each December, how it helps me to remember  
God is with us most when things just can't get worse!  
The most inconvenient Christmas ever was, was the first.

We will look forward to gathering with you (mostly virtually) this Advent season. We'll get through. And we'll see that, even in a time of pandemic, Christmas “works”. Thanks be to God, and Joy to the World!

*Pastor Dave + Sharon*

## Get your Advent and Christmas Kits NOW!

Some of you will remember that we had “Holy Week Kits” available in the spring – palms, communion, and flower seeds. As this pandemic drags into a new liturgical year, we are ready for you to get the supplies you need to help you create sacred space at home. On Pastor Dave’s front porch (1579 Cumberland), or at the church by pre-arrangement, you can pick up what you need to equip your home for participatory worship this Advent and Christmas season. Included are

- A do-it-yourself Advent wreath suitable for taping to your refrigerator, mirror, or any window
- The elements for communion on the first Sunday of Advent, November 29
- Candles and drip protectors for you to share during Christmas Eve worship
- Story and Activity booklets for your children

## Online Advent Devotional

*Presbyterians Today* is offering an online Advent and Christmas devotional, “Let Us Light Candles: Matthew 25 and the work of Advent.” This devotional takes us through Advent and Christmastide, and brings to us the inspiring words in Howard Thurman’s poem “I Will Light Candles This Christmas.”

Thurman, a Baptist pastor, theologian and civil rights activist, was born in 1899. The grandson of a former slave, Thurman was named by *Life* magazine in 1953 as one of the 12 greatest preachers in the country. The pastor not only co-founded San Francisco’s Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples in 1944 — the first interfaith and intercultural congregation in the United States — but he also mentored a young Martin Luther King Jr., who received his Ph.D. in 1955 at Boston University, where Thurman was serving as the first Black dean of Marsh Chapel. Nowhere better can Thurman’s belief in redemptive, transformative love be seen than in his writings about the light that came into the world at Christmastime.

Please visit <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/today/advent2020/> to access this devotional.

## Meetings

December 7 7:00 pm Preschool Board  
 December 10 7:00 pm Steering Committee  
 December 14 6:30 pm Deacons  
 December 17 7:00 pm Session

## Christmas Eve Worship 6:00 pm

We will livestream Christmas Eve Worship on the Church’s Facebook page at 6:00 pm on Thursday, December 24. Worship will be posted on YouTube immediately following the live stream.

*There will be no gathering at the Carvers’ home after Christmas Eve Worship this year.*

## Christmas Joy Offering

By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor God’s gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Please help by visiting <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/christmas-joy/>. There you will find more information about the Joy Offering and a link to give online. Or, mail the enclosed payment envelope to CHUP. We will pass along your donation to the PCUSA. Thank you for participating in this holiday tradition!

## Electronic Giving

**Online giving:** Go to [www.chup.org](http://www.chup.org) and click “Donate.”

**App Giving:** Go to the App store or Google Play and search for “Give Plus Church” to download for FREE.

**Mobile Giving:** Text \$amount to 412-888-0842.

## Food Pantry Needs

Our food pantry is in need of peanut butter, jelly, canned tuna, and canned chicken. If you are able to donate, please contact Mary Stacy [mstacy103@gmail.com](mailto:mstacy103@gmail.com)

## Prayer Concerns

**Members:** Janet Sbraccia, Eleanor Arlet, Ciechanowski Family, Terri Blachek, Peter Veltman, Lil McConnell, Cheryl Shaw, Kitty Kistler, Maryanne Richardson.

**Friends & Relatives:** Ed & Judy Moscovitz, Teresa Stacy, Debbie Beatty, Barbara Durfee, Patricia Sullivan, Dwayne Orris, Joe Petagno, Dawn Sedlock, Frieda Jones, Tim Murray, Ellie Musolino, Lorraine Barth, Lisa & Nicholas Daugherty, Eadie Children, Krieger Family, Mark Mattern.

## Sympathy

To the family of Pauline Whitaker, Janet Sbraccia's mother. Janet would like to thank everyone for their thoughts, prayers, and cards prior to and following the passing of her mom. The love of her extended church family is deeply treasured.

## December Birthdays

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1  | Sean Imler<br>Lilyanne Dunhoff                   |
| 2  | William Richardson<br>Lynn Langford              |
| 3  | Michelle Kish                                    |
| 6  | Ariel Carver                                     |
| 7  | Brian Zeisloft                                   |
| 10 | Nora Kistler<br>Linnea Kunicky                   |
| 11 | Sandi Blum Field                                 |
| 12 | Sarah Evans<br>Sean Pearson<br>Elizabeth Shrader |
| 14 | Matthew Barnes                                   |
| 16 | Natalie Imler                                    |
| 19 | Bridgette Wolbert                                |
| 21 | Diana Frick<br>Eva Neszpaul                      |
| 22 | Darcy Prevost                                    |
| 23 | Brandon Hartman                                  |
| 25 | Jennifer McGee<br>Morgan Pearson                 |
| 27 | Doug Schneider<br>Lydia Veltman                  |
| 28 | Rilynn Boden                                     |
| 29 | Steve Lignos                                     |
| 30 | Isaac Salinetro                                  |
| 31 | Cathy Schneider                                  |

## Congratulations

To Sarah Claassen and her husband Jason, who welcomed Ezra James Claassen to the family on November 18! Mom, Dad, baby, and big brother Judah are all doing well!

To long-time friend of CHUP, the Rev. Mark Whitsel. He and his wife Kelly welcomed their fourth child, Ellick James, Whitsel, on November 3. Mark is the pastor of the Pleasant Hills United Presbyterian Church.

## New Member

We welcome Christian Martine to communicant membership in the congregation. Christian is currently a full time student seeking a degree in computer science at Southern New Hampshire University (online) and is active in the Air Force Reserve. Prior to the pandemic, he was also employed full time at Core Resources in Robinson. He and his wife, Corie, have one child, Atlas, who was baptized at CHUP on November 22.

## Need Help?

Do you need help of one kind or another? If you are in need of food, or someone to run an errand for you, or a friendly voice with whom to speak... please let us know!  
Email [dave@chup.org](mailto:dave@chup.org) and we will marshal the resources to help you face the challenges of your day. You are not alone!

## Do You Have Prayer Needs?

Send your joys and concerns to [prayer@chup.org](mailto:prayer@chup.org) and everyone on our email prayer chain will be notified.

If you would like to receive prayer notifications, there are three ways to sign up:

**Visit** [www.chup.org](http://www.chup.org),  
**Email** [chup@chup.org](mailto:chup@chup.org),  
or **Call** the church office  
**412-921-6153**.

## Runner Articles

Information or articles for the January Runner are due to the church office no later than Sunday, December 20. You may email them to [chup@chup.org](mailto:chup@chup.org) or leave a message on the office phone 412-921-6153.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*Christmas Eve Service will be streamed live on the Church's Facebook page at 6:00 pm*



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