



The First United
Presbyterian Church
of Crafton Heights

David B. Carver, Pastor
www.chup.org
December 2021

There was a lot of excitement in the little town of Roquemaure, France in the fall of 1843. The local parish had finally renovated their organ, and the priest persuaded local poet Placide Cappeau to write a Christmas poem. Cappeau had been born into a family of barrel-makers, and seemed destined to follow in his father's footsteps. However, while he was a boy, he and another friend were handling a firearm, and Cappeau's right hand was blown off. He entered school and eventually became a writer, lawyer, and merchant.

Cappeau's poem, "Minuit, Chrétiens", was set to music by Adolphe Adam, and was at first viewed as an operatic work – reserved for the professionals.

In 1855 a Unitarian minister named John Dwight translated the hymn into English with the title "O Holy Night", and it immediately became popular, especially amongst abolitionists in the northern USA. "O Holy Night" is almost always on two lists of Christmas music: "best-loved Christmas songs" and "ridiculously hard to sing Christmas songs."

One scholar puts it this way: "The faithful gathered in the village church - the less faithful too, who have put on their fine clothes for the occasion - seem to listen to 'O Holy Night' with a pious recollection. In reality, all are tense while waiting for the fateful moment. The moment when the local tenor will start the end of the piece, pushing the last 'Noëëëëëë!' while shouting to reach the highest note. Will it be wrong?" (from an article entitled "Midnight, Christians, and the Fateful Treble", in Quebec Science 12/24/2017)

She's not wrong. It's a tough song to sing, indeed.

Yet, as long as I have anything to do with it, this song will be on the playlist for Christmas Eve, 2021. And since, so far as I know, neither Josh Groban nor Placido Domingo anticipate worshipping in the Heights that Friday evening, it will just be us, taking a stab at what has been called "one of the more difficult Christmas songs to execute properly, especially for untrained amateurs."

Why? Why can't we stick with "Silent Night" or "Joy To The World"? Aren't those songs true enough?

Indeed they are. But this year, perhaps more than most, we need to know the power of the fifth and sixth lines: "A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices/for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!"

I'm not sure about you, but I feel that weariness here at the tail end of 2021. It's not simply weariness in my spirit or my physical being, but I sense a larger sigh at work amongst us. We are so tired, beloved: tired or arguing the same arguments over and over again; tired of waiting and watching and being disappointed; tired of feeling anxious or depressed over what may have been an unbearable season of illness or death; tired of being tired.

And so on Christmas Eve, we'll be here, doing our best to get the notes right. Some will feel a sense of relief; others might wonder what in the Noel is going on, but at the end of the day, it's what we were born to do: hope, watch, wait, sing, and keep moving.

I don't know where you'll be spending the darkest and coldest time of the year, but I invite you to spend it in the company of untrained amateurs who are doing our best to hit the high notes. Not because we are all that, but because the One of whom we sing, for whom we wait, and after whom we follow seems to do his best work with untrained amateurs.

I'll look for you (and listen for you) in worship!

Pastor Dave

“Mission to Mission” Returns

For more than a decade, the First U.P. Church of Crafton Heights has sent a team of adults to share in what God is doing through the faith communities of the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas. Several hurricanes have ripped through that region in recent years, leaving a trail of broken homes and shattered hope. Since then, the churches have responded by coordinating teams of professional and volunteer construction workers who assist homeowners in rehabilitating their communities and addressing issues of systemic poverty. In addition to the construction, some of the CHUP volunteers have been able to participate in social service ministries such as home health visits and neighborhood childcare. Finally, each trip includes educational and devotional components as we are able to visit the US/Mexican border and share time in study and worship.

After having cancelled the 2021 trip, we are longing to schedule one for 2022. We are currently hoping to travel February 19 – 26. Our plan is to take a group of adults to travel to Mission, TX, where we'll stay with our partners at the First Presbyterian Church.

While final cost for this venture will depend on the actual number of participants and the price of the plane fare, etc., when booked as well as fund-raisers and other variables, we estimate that the cost per person will be approximately \$400. If you would like to know more about participating in a trip of this nature, please contact Pastor Dave as soon as possible. If you do plan to attend, a \$50 deposit is due to Pastor Dave by December 12.

Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank

December distribution dates are still being finalized. Please call the office for dates and times. In order to receive food, you will simply need to pre-register with some general household information. At each distribution you can expect over 20 pounds of groceries and produce. There is no cost or agenda, our goal is to provide food to those in need. Please direct any questions to CHUP staff, or you can reach out directly to the Food Bank if you have a greater need or would like more details.



Fellowship Opportunities

All ladies are welcome to join us on Tuesdays at 10:00 AM for fellowship, refreshments and discussion. During December we will be using Ed Stanley's video series "Who Needs Christmas". We meet in Fellowship Hall and please bring a friend!

Adult and Children's Sunday School is back in full swing!

- Children's Sunday School has been utilizing a "one-room" schoolhouse format starting at 9:45 AM and all ages are welcome. This month we will be talking about Advent. We hope to see you there!
- Adult Sunday School is meeting in the parlor from 9:45 - 10:30 AM. Join Peter Veltman and Kate Lyden for a scripture study. Your attendance is most welcome!

Online Advent Devotional

Advent marks the beginning of the church year, and it is a great time to center ourselves in God's word and God's movement in the world. Pastor Dave is one of a number of folks who has written for an online Advent Devotional that will be shared by the CCO Campus Ministry. If you'd like to receive an email with a new Scripture, story, and reflection every day from Sunday November 28 until Christmas Eve, visit <https://cojubilee.us11.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=a66e1c29e69fff4e0cc6c1abe&id=8de8a528cd> and subscribe.

CHUP Food Pantry Needs

The food pantry is in need of some specific items:

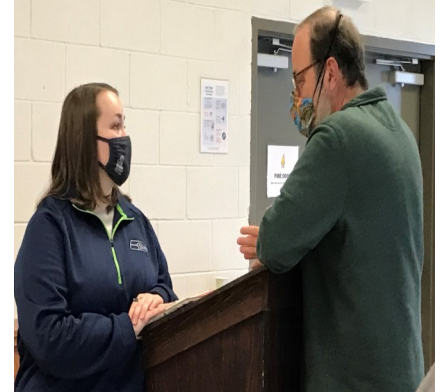
- Cheerios
- Apple Juice
- Boxed Potatoes
- Boxed Rice
- Canned Vegetables
- Canned Chicken

Please consider helping during the Holiday Season!

All-Church Retreat at Camp Crestfield

After a year hiatus due to the pandemic, a small but mighty group assembled at Camp Crestfield for the annual All-Church Retreat. There was no true theme or outline to follow, but Hannah Ostlund, our seminary intern, held some small devotions about being a community after each meal, which was well received by all who attended. There was lots of free time and everyone enjoyed one another's company as we rested, played, sang songs and ate meals together. The children had fun playing touch football, and took many hikes on Saturday, being that the weather was better than we expected! In the evenings, everyone enjoyed playing numerous rounds of Codenames and puzzle building together, and a small group even watched a musical. As usual, we also enjoyed a campfire with S'mores!

Sunday morning worship was held; and then, to the dismay of children who wished we could do this every weekend, we returned back to Pittsburgh. The relaxed retreat was very enjoyable; but we hope that next year more families and friends join us, and take part in the great community we have together!



The Open Door

Grounded in principles of the Christian faith, but open to all, The Open Door Youth Outreach exists to improve the lives of neighborhood youth through programming that supports strong self-identity, resiliency and behavioral competence. We are intentional in purposeful community engagement through academic assistance, social interaction and athletics, with caring adult volunteers in an environment of safety and fun.

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. - Hebrews 10:24-25

On November 12th the Open Door brought this scripture to life by hosting our annual Thanksgiving Dinner to the Crafton Heights community. One of the best ways to show love to our neighbors and show good deeds is through the breaking of bread and meeting together. Many were encouraged and excited to see the Open Door was open again and serving the community, especially the youth. This could not have happened without all the volunteers who pitched in to make the evening a success.

A special thanks goes out to Councilwoman Theresa Kail-Smith who gave the Open Door a generous donation for the food and to the students from Waynesburg University Bonner Scholar program who continue to volunteer every Friday for Rec night.



Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

- Matthew 19:14 (NIV)



We are looking forward to the upcoming Christmas party at the Open Door on December 17th (6pm-10pm). Please visit our website for registration and additional information.

theopendoorpg.com

The Open Door *Continued*

Friday Night Rec continues to be a fun, safe place for youth to hang out on Friday nights. Both sessions are well attended. Approximately (25) K-5th graders meet 6pm-8pm and (15) 6th-12th graders meet 8pm-10pm every Friday. The go-to game is dodge ball with a variety of other games to play. The snack shack is open during each session and for others the Arts and Crafts room is a quiet place to relax, draw or play board games. With the new additions of a pool table and a new Foosball game (purchased by the church deacons) the youth also have opportunity to engage in other types of competition. For the most part, many of the youth just like to run around in the Open Door playing tag, hiding, and chasing friends.



As we turn towards the Christmas season, The Open Door connected with Pressley Ridge and the Boys and Girls club in Sto-Rox to allow individuals make wishes come true through the Angle Tree program for about 30 youth who desire different types of gift wishes. Thanks to everyone who grabbed a tag from the Angle Christmas tree at the church. You will make a child happy this holiday season.



Please check out our new and improved website at theoendoorpgh.com. It is more interactive and will help us streamline all of the activities associated with the Open Door which includes up to date information, financial donations, event registration and volunteer sign ups right on the website. If you are interested in helping out in any way or want more information please contact Bruce at opendoor@chup.org or at 412-921-6153 Ext. 14.

Preschool

November brought us stories of Thankfulness and celebrating Cardigan Sweater/ Kindness Day with WQED! The children were eager to share all the ways in which they are kind. Sharing toys, helping clean up, playing with friends and siblings, hugging a friend who is sad.

To celebrate Kindness Day we painted sweater cutouts with bright water colors and added individual ways each child can show how to be kind. We made Big “K’s” and signs showing our ideas. WQED was “kind” and gave each child a book bag filled with playdoh, bubbles, jump ropes, notebooks and markers.

We are on our way to make everyday a kindness day!



venmo

*Would you like to make a difference in the lives of our young children? **Donate!** We are looking for sponsors who can supplement our tuition costs. Use the VENMO QR code to make an easy donation to our program.*

Christmas Joy Special Offerings

The Christmas Joy Offering reflects that God is with us, through the generous gifts that support church leaders among us - retired, present and future - who have pointed us to God. God is calling new leaders for our Church and world, through the ministry of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color, offering students the means for a brighter future and enhanced opportunities to use their talents and skills to serve God, the Church and the world for years to come. The Special Offerings offer opportunities for partnership, learning and witness and they profoundly affect the life of the church as a collective witness to Jesus Christ's love for the whole church. Special Offering envelopes can be found in the back of the sanctuary and will be received on December 19 and December 24.

CHUP Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are needed in the following areas. Please think about how you could make a difference at CHUP!

- Coordinator needed to work with Carlynton Counselor coordinating volunteer hours with high school students to work on projects around the church.
- Volunteers needed to work on the church "honey do" list. Some examples would be changing light bulbs, making minor repairs, touch up painting and organizing storage areas, just to name a few. All of this would be under the direction and guidance of the Building & Grounds committee.
- Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank coordinator—work as the liaison for the GPFB and the families receiving items, scheduling deliveries and communicating with the volunteer team.
- Volunteer needed to put away supply orders and organize the storage room about once a month.

Please leave a message with the office at 412-921-6153 or contact [Cheri Mack](#) for more details.



The Helping Hand Fund 2.0

The CHUP Helping Hand Fund was established decades ago as a part of the vision of Dr. Leonard Schafer. "Doc" Schafer was an active member of the church and a dentist in this community, and he understood the fact that many of us need help from time to time, and that it's difficult to ask. The Helping Hand Fund became a way for members of the church to give and receive timely assistance to each other with a minimum of red tape or social awkwardness. For a long time, that fund was vibrant, but eventually grew dormant for a variety of reasons.

During the Coronavirus Pandemic of 2020-2021, the congregation received a generous gift and the elders directed that the Fund be reinvigorated and strengthened to the end that more of our members and neighbors could participate in this effort. Our hope is that the Helping Hand Fund can provide members and friends of the CHUP Community with the opportunity to assist one another with urgent financial needs such as rent, utilities, medical expenses, or other disasters. One-time grants of between \$250 – \$750 may be made upon recommendation by the ministry team responsible.

We realize that while some folks will need assistance, others may be able to "pay it forward". The Helping Hand Fund accepts donations in any amount.

If you would like to **nominate someone for a grant or apply for a grant**, please complete the form on the church website (<https://chup.org/relief-fund/>). Note that we expect that there will be a connection with the ministries of the First UP Church of Crafton Heights (including the Open Door and the Crafton Heights Community Preschool). Those who do not have an ongoing relationship with the congregation, the Preschool, or The Open Door may be eligible for a grant from the Lazarus Fund of Pittsburgh Presbytery.

While the nature of the gifts from the fund will be reported to the Session and Deacons, the names of donors or recipients remain confidential.



Volunteers Needed!

Prayer Concerns

Members: Carl Martelli, Florence Hall, Linda Schramm, Marge Freeman, Bob Walters

Friends & Relatives: Adrienne Parris Reynolds, Sue Whitaker, Than & Ruthina Veltman, Pastor Michael Weller, Wayne Arlet, Jr., Kristen McHugh & Family

December Birthdays

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



Runner Articles

Information or articles for the January Runner are due by Friday, December 17.

You may email them to Marissa at the church office: chup@chup.org

Worship Opportunities

In-Person Worship: Services are Sundays at 11:00 am. Please read our updated safety guidelines before attending in person worship: <https://files.constantcontact.com/7a16d75f001/80d3381d-f76d-4188-8553-c263835f868e.pdf>

Online Worship: Each Sunday at 11:00 am, our worship service livestreams on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CraftonHeightsChurch/> And then later on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLU5XsLRAbBddh2dgu38_W9bbRu9wYaOB4

Electronic Giving

Go to <https://chup.org/giving/> to find easy options for sending your donation electronically. Feel free to contact the office chup@chup.org to find out more about how you can designate where you would like your donation to go: the Church, the Preschool, the Open Door, the Food Pantry... the list goes on! Thank you for supporting our many ministries and enabling us to spread God's love in our community and throughout the world.

CHUP Online

Did you know that you can view the Runner in full color on our website? Back issues, too! Our website is mobile friendly and easier to navigate than ever.

Please visit www.chup.org to find online newsletters, sermons, prayer concerns, giving opportunities, announcements, online worship links, and clickable information on how you can become involved in our many ministries.

Mark Your Calendar!

The next CHUP Blood Drive will be held on Sunday, December 5 from 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM. We hope to see you there!

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, or prayer... please let us know!

Email dave@chup.org and we will marshal the resources to help you face the challenges of your day.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

To order a poinsettia for Christmas, please use the form below and drop it with payment into the collection plate. All orders must be pre-paid and submitted by December 12.

The cost is \$7 each.

Please use a separate form for each poinsettia.

Name _____

Phone _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____



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