



The First United
Presbyterian Church
of Crafton Heights

The Runner

David B. Carver, Pastor
www.chup.org
February 2022

If you've participated in worship in the past few weeks, you'll know that our session has accepted the invitation to be known as a "Matthew 25 Congregation" in the Presbyterian Church (USA). This vision arose out of a series of discussions at the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018) of the PC(USA). Commissioners to those gatherings challenged the larger church – and individual congregations, Presbyteries, and Synods – to take Jesus' words to heart and to live them out in the world by responding to the needs of people who are hungry, without a home, imprisoned, or oppressed.



The PC(USA)'s engagement of Matthew 25 contains three key emphases that have long been at the heart of CHUP's mission and ministry. Our elders thought that signing on to this initiative was a good way for us to formalize these commitments, which include congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and ending systemic poverty.

Congregational Vitality is really a call for each of us to be passionate about following Jesus into the world. It's not necessarily something that is measured by how many people attend a specific program or contribute to a particular cause (although those numbers can be helpful guides). Rather, our commitment to embrace Congregational Vitality as a goal means that we, as individuals and a congregation, will challenge ourselves and each other to seek to look at the world around us with the eyes of Jesus. It means that we will bring our gifts – of time, of energy, of vision and creativity – and use them in serving our neighbors and in building a healthy congregation in this time and place.

While Matthew 25 doesn't explicitly use the word "racism", Jesus uses the parable of the Sheep and the Goats to speak to the nations of the world, and to call those who wear his name to share and demonstrate his concern for the marginalized and oppressed in the world. In fact, the parable speaks harshly about those who are unwilling to act on behalf of those who have been somehow "othered" by the world. Our congregation has long been committed to looking ways to reduce our tendency to treat one another as "strangers", and instead to seek ways to actively work toward justice and reconciliation.

"Systemic Poverty" is a way of saying that people who are poor tend to remain so because the deck is stacked against them for any number of reasons. Through (among other ministries) participation in the Lazarus Fund, our Helping Hand Fund, and our Food Distribution Ministry (see exciting news about that elsewhere in this newsletter), members of the CHUP are actively seeking to be a blessing to those who are experiencing poverty. Our commitment to Matthew 25 reminds us that we need to work to address injustices in housing, health care, the environment, and other areas. In many cases, poverty is a symptom of a condition brought about by a brokenness in a larger system – and the call of the Christian is to not only relieve the pain, but to find out why people are hurting.

You can learn more about the Matthew 25 initiative on our own website, or by catching up with some of the recent sermons on my blog (<https://castyournet.wordpress.com>). I'm glad to share this ministry with you!

Pastor Dave



Fellowship Opportunities

- Ladies! Please join us Tuesday mornings at 10:00 AM in Fellowship Hall as we begin a study series by Laura Story: *When God Doesn't Fix It*. We will have discussion and prayer and all are welcome. Bring a friend!
- Children of all ages are welcome Sunday mornings at 9:45 AM for our one-room Sunday School! We meet in the old choir room on the first floor.

Food Bank Coordinator Needed

Changing Lives | Helping Others

The FOOD BANK pilot program has served approximately 20 families twice a month for the past few months. Families were grateful to receive a free box of produce and a box of staple items at each distribution. This program has come to an end, we would love for this outreach to continue with the help of a Food Bank Coordinator to take the lead. This volunteer would be responsible to set up delivery days, contact recipients and coordinate the existing team of volunteers eager to help with each distribution. CHUP has always had a heart for helping others and this is a way we can continue to help our neighbors in need. If you would like to learn more about this amazing opportunity to serve, please talk with [Barb Prevost](#) or [Cheri Mack](#).



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.

For in him we live, and move, and have our being.....

-Acts 17:28 (ESV)

As 2022 begins, we are excited of what this year holds for the Open Door. Friday night rec continues to be a staple for the Open Door. The community youth continue to come out on Friday nights to hang out and play in a safe environment with adult volunteers. Great things are instore for the youth for this upcoming year. Just recently, an air hockey table and a ping pong table were donated to the Open Door for the youth's playing pleasure. Also, a new mural was donated to brighten up the walls of the Open Door. We are very grateful for the continued support from those who believe that the Open Door is a great landing spot for their giveaways. In addition to donations, we have been truly blessed by several donors who gave substantial financial gifts to make sure the Open Door continues to make a positive impact in the lives of the youth in Crafton Heights.



The Open Door Chess Club has taken another step in making chess night another great place for the young and old to test their mental fortitude. Chess teaches critical thinking and strategic skills needed for every aspect of life. We are collaborating with The Queens Gambit Chess Institute (<https://www.tqgchess.institute>) to take our chess club to the next level. They are a non-profit organization that uses education and extracurricular enrichment as a catalyst for change and social force for good in Pittsburgh. They believe that through chess, anyone can learn the tools to succeed. They will be donating chess boards to the Open Door, provide training to those who take chess seriously or want to learn and help connect us to chess tournaments around the city. In addition, The Queens Gambit offers serious players the opportunity to be rated so they can be recognized around the world. Please see their link for more information and what they offer through the Open Door connection.



The Open Door *Continued*

On January 20th I had the opportunity to attend a service fair at Waynesburg University to recruit college students for Friday Night Rec and Cross Trainers Summer Camp. Our relationship with Waynesburg University continues to get stronger. The current students from the Bonner Scholar Program continue to be a blessing not only to the Open door and Friday Night Rec but most importantly to the youth of Crafton Heights. Positive relationships between the college students and the youth are without question the best part of Friday Nights. With the exception of dodgeball. Great dodgeball battles are fought and won right in the center court of the Open Door coliseum. Screams and laughter often fills the air until the winner stands alone.



Remember to visit our website at: theopendoorpggh.com for the latest updates of events, registrations or donations. If you are interested in helping out in any or want more information please contact Bruce at opendoor@chup.org or at 412-921-6153 Ext. 14



Preschool

Transportation was January’s theme. The preschool children loved the dramatic play area, “The Construction Zone” stacking blocks, hammering and building roads was some of the fun that kept them exploring all morning. The Pre-K kids really enjoyed “The Bus Station” making tickets, driving passengers to favorite destinations as they looked for transportation clues around the room. They were eager to use their knowledge and skills to make road signs, construct bridges, and count and write letters based on the transportation theme.

In February we will explore wild animals, where they live, what they eat and how they move. Thanks to a generous donation from DEP Technologies, we are excited to welcome The Pittsburgh Zoo into the classroom for an up-close look at some animals, and learn more about our wild friends. We will also have the Allegheny County Park Ranger Program come to our preschool too. We will learn about the different native animal species that live in our county by exploring their extensive collection of animal skins and skulls. We will have the opportunity to touch and examine the specimens. Following COVID guidelines, wearing masks and social distancing.

Crafton Heights Community Preschool depends on supporters and their contributions to continue to bring our high-quality early education program to this neighborhood. We are looking for donations in the following areas: Sponsor a child, every child who attends CHCP receives a \$120-month scholarship, we would love to have a sponsor for every child. Sponsor the dramatic play area \$50 each month, this area changes each month to coordinate with our themes, and allows children to explore a variety of roles while using specific toys and items. Such as a bakery, bus station, pet shop, flower shop, toy shop, train station, ect. Please consider making CHCP part of your regular donations this year. We accept VENMO, PAYPAL, Checks. Classroom volunteers are needed too, if you’d like to make a difference in a child’s life consider coming into the classrooms from 9:30-11am Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday. Talk to

[Cheri](#) for details.



VENMO



Crafton Heights Community Preschool

2022/23 ENROLLMENT GOING ON
NOW!

Do Not Delay—We anticipate full enrollment before May.

Our program is Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday from 9:00 AM -12:00 PM and we offer both Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten classes.

Our nurturing teachers and stimulating curriculum foster social, academic, and physical skills. Our goal is to provide the personal and educational foundations necessary for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Check out our FACEBOOK page and look at the albums to see all of our great learning activities.

Call for more information and an application. 412-921-6153

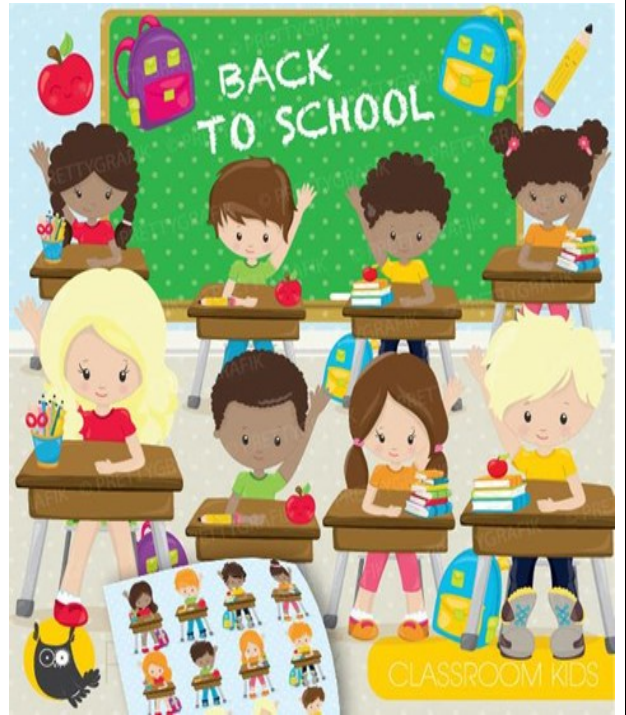
Preschool Staff Highlight

I'd like to re-introduce my teaching staff at Crafton Heights Community Preschool. It's been a long COVID season and we are busy teaching, learning and growing on the 3rd floor of this old building.

Let's learn a little more about "Ms. Whoop" as the children call her.

My name is Amanda Hughes, I have been teaching at CHCP for seven years. For the past four years I have been the lead teacher in the preschool room. One of the many things I love about my job is connecting with the families and learning about their children. My favorite thing that happens at preschool is watching the kids grow and change throughout the year, making friends, learning and developing skills as we introduce new themes and activities each week. It is exciting to be part of their joy and eagerness to learn.

My husband Bucky and I have two children. Jacob is almost sixteen and Carlee is fourteen. Both of my children are involved in many sports and activities in and out of school. If we aren't at a sporting event, we are making memories at camp.



Celebrating African-American History Month at CHUP: The Things We Share

The congregation is once again thrilled to take part in “Things we Share: A recital of African American Spirituals”. On Sunday, February 27 we will hear songs of the common experiences that affect us all as the human race. We’ll be led by Mr. Kenneth Stockard, tenor, who will be accompanied by our own Lucas Bowman, on the piano. Kenny Stockard is a native of St. Louis, MO. He was born into a Baptist church full of music with no instruments, only voices. There he learned a true appreciation of the human voice, its nuances and its beauty. He studied Voice and Biology at Stillman College graduating in 2012 with a B.S. in Biology and a thesis focused on Lung Capacities of Singers versus Non-Singers. Kenny relocated to Pittsburgh in 2013 to pursue graduate studies in Environmental Studies at Point Park University. He has worked as a professional singer since 2008 and has traveled the U.S. extensively sharing the gift God has lent to him since. Kenny’s partner in this worship service will be Lucas Bowman, who graduated from Duquesne University with a B. A. in Piano Performance in 2016.

Some in the congregation will remember with profound admiration and gratitude the last time that Lucas and Kenny visited CHUP with this concert. Please make every effort to attend either in person or virtually.



Tell us about a TRIP that changed your life!

During the season of Lent (March 3 – April 16) we will be considering a theme of “Walking With Jesus”. The scripture texts will all be rooted in the journey that Jesus took to Jerusalem – the pilgrimage that brought him through Samaria, into Jericho, and ultimately to the Mount of Olives, the Upper Room, and Calvary. As we think about this trip that Jesus and his disciples took, and the ways that it changed them, we’d like to hear from you – what are some of YOUR stories from the road? Have you undertaken a journey that left a profound imprint on your life? We’re not talking so much about that fantastic vacation you took at the shore where you met that special someone, but rather, were you a part of a mission trip that changed your life? Did you have an encounter while on a vacation or business trip that helped you get a glimpse of what God is doing in the world? In other words, we’re not necessarily looking for fantastic experiences that you’ll remember for a lifetime, but rather for encounters on the road that made an impact on your life. If you have stories like this, please reach out to Pastor Dave (dave@chup.org) or text 412-498-5410.



Prayer Concerns

Members: Carl Martelli, Florence Hall, Linda Schramm, Marge Freeman, Eleanor Arlet, Sue Barth, Liam Klein

Friends & Relatives: Adrienne Parris Reynolds, Sue Whitaker, Than & Ruthina Veltman, Pastor Michael Weller, Wayne Arlet, Jr., Peter Veltman, Lisa Myers, Wayne Arlet, Anne & Ethan Varner, Joe Mehl

February Birthdays

1st Timothy Durkin
Trinity Locke
2nd Marcy Davis
6th Jonathan Mack
Jackson Dix
Hazel Donovan
7th Becky Schrenker
10th Nicole Zeller
11th T. J. Schramm
12th Denise Musko
14th Jonathan Walker
16th Allison Hickey
Paige Neidbala
17th Katie Phelps
18th Glenn Mack
Sharon Niedbala
19th Cori Shrader
21st Paul Creely
22nd Linda Schramm
23rd Brittany Schrenker
25th Bob Mikula
Levi Veltman
27th Leslie Fisher
28th Gabe Kish
(If we've left out a birthday,
please let us know!)



Runner Articles

Information or articles for the March Runner are due by Friday, February 18.

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, February 27 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.

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