



The First United  
Presbyterian Church  
of Crafton Heights

# The Runner

David B. Carver, Pastor  
[www.chup.org](http://www.chup.org)  
January 2022

As we enter into 2022, the First U.P. Church of Crafton Heights will once more invite worshipers to make use of star words, also called “star gifts.” For those who may not be aware, this is a prayer practice connected to Epiphany and the new year that has been growing in popularity in Protestant churches for nearly a decade now. Those who attend worship on Sunday, January 2 will find an arrangement of guiding words that are printed on paper adorned with stars. Everyone is invited to take a card and place it somewhere they will see it regularly throughout the year to allow consistent reflection on how God is moving through, around, or in connection to that word.



For instance, in 2021, the word I received was “consideration”. I’ve got it taped to the shelf above my desk, and I see it as I connect with folks on email, social media, and my phone. When the year started, I thought about “consideration” as a courtesy I could extend to others. I tried to consider the thoughts, feelings, and emotions behind some of the communication I received (or didn’t receive). Later in the year, I began to think that I ought to be considerate of myself and those closest to me – that the practice was not only an outward-facing discipline. Perhaps you’ve had similar experiences if you took a Star Word in January 2021.

It’s important to note that while there is clearly a bit of whimsy involved in this practice, there are several important theological statements being made here.

The Magi followed a star in the heavens, which ultimately led them to Jesus. We, too, are free to use all the resources we have available to us—including creative prayer practices and intention words for the new year—to move closer to Jesus. We trust that God uses multiple ways to guide us and speak to us. Star words are one such lens that might provide us a way to look for God in our midst, both actively and in hindsight. Likewise, we confess that it is often easy to miss God in our daily midst. Having an intention word to consider now, as well as to reflect on at the end of the year, allows for us to see God in ways we may not have seen God before. This is the greatest gift.

For many of us, the most common prayer practice consists of speaking to God as opposed to listening, silence or contemplation. Star Words may invite a new prayer rhythm of reflection and contemplation that can be a powerful new way to connect with God.

In addition, the fact that we will not select or choose these words, but rather simply pick them randomly, provides us with an opportunity to practice the spiritual task of receiving. It is not we who are in control in this moment. Instead, we trust that God is present, and we let go of our desire to cultivate or control.

At the Epiphany celebration on January 2 at CHUP, we invite everyone to select a star word to carry with you in the new year. With this word, you can practice centering yourself in prayer and seeking God’s leading in engaging the word you receive. Those who are unable to be present at worship can contact the church via phone, email, or social media and we’ll happily send one out. Consider the journey of the Magi; they were led by the star which appeared to them. Guided by the stars, together, we will journey closer towards Jesus.

I’ll look for you in worship!

*Pastor Dave*

## Confirmation Class

The 2021-2022 Confirmation Experience is underway! We have 8 young people, all of whom are active in our Youth Group, taking the time and energy to explore some of the essential elements of their faith lives. As you can see, not everyone can make every session in person, but it's encouraging to Pastor Dave and Hannah to see the ways that these young people are intent on thinking intentionally on their faith journeys. The group meets once or twice a month for dinner prior to Youth Group, and many of the participants hope to make a profession of faith at some point near the beginning of Lent. Please pray for these young people as they seek to discern God's call on their lives!



## Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank

January 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 contact 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.  
[pittsburghfoodbank.org](http://pittsburghfoodbank.org) (412) 460-3663



## Fellowship Opportunities

Ladies! Please join us on Tuesday January 4th as we resume our bible study based on Max Lucados video series "Unshakable Hope". We meet every Tuesday at 10:00 AM in Fellowship Hall for an hour of conversation & prayer.

Calling all children! All ages are invited to Sunday School beginning January 9th. We meet at 9:45 Sunday morning. Hope to see you there!

## 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 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.*

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live (play) together in unity!  
-Psalm 133:1

As 2021 comes to a close, we at the Open Door finished off the year with our annual Christmas dinner party on December 17th. It was another way for us to reach out to the community of Crafton Heights and share a meal together with families. We also sent the youth home with a gift bag of goodies and a game. It was very well attended with over 80 individuals and fun was had by all. As Christmas music played in the background, the youth enjoyed a time of arts and crafts and running around with glow sticks, dancing to the music. Of course, the best part after the pasta meal was cookies and hot chocolate. Many thanks, again, to our wonderful cooking team of Linda Pearson and Pauline Bodnar and the many volunteers that made the night a huge success.



### 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 twenty-five K-5th graders meet from 6pm-8pm and fifteen 6th-12th graders meet from 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, color, play board games or building something with Legos. With the new additions of a pool table and a new Foosball game the youth also have the 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. Soon to come is a lounge area for those who just want to hang out and chat with their friends. Possibly in the future, a climbing wall will make its way for the adventurous ones.



Chess night at the Open Door is beginning to take shape as an alternative to the business of Friday night rec. It is becoming a nice, quiet spot for young thinkers and senior mentors to test their knowledge across the chess board. As this grows, it is my prayer that the Open Door Chess Club will produce chess enthusiasts that will take it a step or two further and enter in chess tournaments around the city or even in other states. If you are interested in giving chess a try, look for our next sign up on our website!

**BENEFITS OF CHESS**

- Brain Growth
- Socialization
- Logic
- Problem Solving
- Planning
- Creativity
- Math Skills
- Reading
- Concentration
- Can-do Attitude
- Memory
- Dendrite Growth



Please check out our new and improved website at [theoendoorpg.com](http://theoendoorpg.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](mailto:opendoor@chup.org) or at 412-921-6153 Ext. 14.

## Preschool

December brought us the sights and smells of the holidays! We had gingerbread scented playdoh. The bakery was open serving “hot cocoa and cookies”. The children loved rolling out the sweet dough and cutting them out to make “cookies”. Decorating gingerbread men with cinnamon and sequence had the rooms smelling delicious! We used visual discrimination to match gingerbread men, and loved playing the gingerbread race game.

Learning the story of the “first Christmas” was inspiring for the children. They loved singing “Jesus was a tiny babe”, “Beat the drums”, and other simple songs telling about the birth of Christ. In lieu of a big festival, we chose to video tape the children singing and had in-classroom end of year Christmas festival.

We look forward to starting the new year with prayers and support that keep this ministry going. Please consider sponsoring a child in the new year with a one-time donation or monthly contributions.



**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.*

## Prayer Concerns

**Members:** Carl Martelli, Florence Hall, Linda Schramm, Marge Freeman, Eleanor Arlet

**Friends & Relatives:** Adrienne Parris Reynolds, Sue Whitaker, Than & Ruthina Veltman, Pastor Michael Weller, Wayne Arlet, Jr., Peter Veltman, Lisa Myers, Jason Slotten, Curtis Bowers

## January Birthdays

2nd	Daniel Miller Kathy Speirs
3rd	Mary Stacy
4th	Kate Lyden
6th	Terri Dorman Megan Veltman
8th	Cathy Hartzell
10th	Lauren Pearson
11th	Zachariah Lucas
12th	Janet Sbraccia
14th	David Barnes
16th	Matt Markus
17th	Marshall Dix
18th	Mary Beth Barnes
21st	Arya Jane Connor
23rd	Amy Durkin
26th	Isabella Lane
29th	Liam Klein Aubrey Slotten Toni Lynn Russell
30th	William Schneider Jr.
31st	Ron Gielarowski



## Runner Articles

Information or articles for the February Runner are due by Friday, January 21.

You may email them to Marissa at the church office: [chup@chup.org](mailto: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=PLU5XsLRABddh2dgu38\\_W9bbRu9wYaOB4](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLU5XsLRABddh2dgu38_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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:dave@chup.org) and we will marshal the resources to help you face the challenges of your day.

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