



The First United
Presbyterian Church
of Crafton Heights

The Runner

David B. Carver, Pastor
www.chup.org
January 2023

Happy New Year! In terms of our liturgical calendar, I'm late with this – we began the Christian year on the first Sunday of Advent. And yet this year we have a treat – we can begin the new calendar year in worship together! I hope that you'll make worship a priority on January 1 and throughout the year.

As we begin 2023, our congregation will once more invite worshippers 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. The premise is fairly simple: just as the Magi carried their gifts while following a star as they searched for baby Jesus, so we can put ourselves in a position to learn more about God and God's presence in our world by reflecting at various points through the year on a word that we receive.



Those who attend worship on Sunday, January 1 will find an arrangement of cards that are face down. The “flip side” contains guiding words on paper adorned with stars. Everyone is invited to take a card at random 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. If you'd like, there's a little “user's guide” that is available as well.

It's important to consider that while this may seem like a made-up holiday or an attempt to create meaning out of nothing, there are in fact some important theological statements being made here.

All of us know how easy it is to miss God in our daily midst. Having an intention word to consider now, as well as to reflect on through the year, allows for us to see God in ways we may not have seen God before. This is a great 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.

I hope that during worship on January 1 at CHUP (or a Sunday thereafter) everyone will select a star word to carry 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



Fellowship Opportunities

Ladies Fellowship: This month was a busy month for the Tuesday ladies group!

We stuffed 3 bags for the Foster Love Project and made cards for the memory care unit at Halcyon for the caroling group to distribute on December 11th. We are also participating in the book study 'Advent in Plain Sight'. Looking ahead - we will continue our video study by Max Lucado's "Grace".



We meet every Tuesday at 10:00 in Fellowship Hall for about an hour for coffee, tea and conversation. Please join us - all are welcome! If you need transportation or would like more information contact Dani Anderson or Barb Prevost.

Potluck Dinner: Congregational Life is hosting a pot luck dinner in Fellowship Hall on January 22nd. We will eat at 5:30 PM. After dinner, Hannah Ostlund, our seminarian, will present slides taken during her mission trip this summer. She visited Malawi, Peru and the U.S. / Mexican border and spent time learning about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on short term missions. So, come and learn about the different cultures Hannah experienced during her travels, and share fellowship with youth group members, congregants and friends. Bring some food to share or just bring yourself! Hope to see you there.

Open Door: A special thanks goes out to all those who participated in the Pressley Ridge Angel Tree program. The Open Door supporters, volunteers and CHUP members fulfilled 38 Christmas wishes for foster children in the Pressley Ridge organization.



Per Capita: One of the ongoing expenses that comes to our congregation is the "Per Capita Apportionment". Each year, our congregation pays a fee – roughly \$36 this year – for each member. That money is sent to the Presbyterian Church (USA) governing bodies – our General Assembly, Synod, and Presbytery. Sometimes people think of that as a "tax", but the reality is that we are a connectional church, and all connections cost something. Think of the Per Capita as a system of roads and bridges that connect us to the mission work of the Presbyterian Church on six continents, the expertise of Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly staff members, and the collective voice of more than 120 Presbyterian Churches in Pittsburgh alone. If you'd like to contribute to defray some or all of your Per Capita, please do so using the regular offering boxes or our online portal: <https://chup.org/giving/>. Just note that it's for "Per Capita". Thanks!

Open Door

Youth Group: The youth group had a wonderful opportunity to go Christmas Caroling at the Halcyon Nursing facility in Bridgeville. It was a great time to sing Christmas songs to the residents. They enjoyed our singing and several of them sang along in their own little way. Many of them clapped after each song. Our youth were tremendous and recognized the joy we were able to bring the residents if only for a short time period. The staff were very gracious and appreciative of us coming out during the holiday season.

Friday Night Rec: Due to the Christmas holiday season and the end of 2022, Friday Night Rec slowed down somewhat with only 2 sessions in the beginning of December. We had our annual Christmas party/dinner on December 16th. A fun time was had by all. We had around 70 people in attendance and gave out toys, games and gift bags to the children. Dinner and music topped of the event for all to enjoy. Friday Night was closed for the Christmas and New Year holidays. We are looking forward to 2023 to continue to build solid relationships with neighborhood children and their families.



Open Door: Friday Night Rec, every Friday (6:00-10:00 PM) until May 2023
Youth Group, every Sunday (7:00-8:30 PM) on 3rd floor of CHUP
Chess Club, every last Wednesday (6:00-7:30 PM) in CHUP Fellowship Hall
Youth Retreat—March 31st-April 2nd
Open Door golf fundraiser, May 13th at Moon Golf Club, with 9AM shotgun start
Cross Trainers Summer Day Camp— June 26th to August 4th
Youth Missions Trip— August 6th-12th



Preschool



We up-cycled planks of flooring to make our snow kids. Each board customized to each child's height. The children used their fingerprints to make the eyes and mouth, adding colorful button spots and a fleece hat and scarf. Creating a forever keepsake.

We'd love to have sponsors helping us with our true tuition costs. Every family only pays a portion of what it costs to run our program. If you'd like to be a sponsor speak with Cheri, Mollie or Lynn for ways that you can help.





PROCEEDS BENEFIT
CRAFTON HEIGHTS
COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL

VACATION GIVEAWAY IS BACK!
WHERE WOULD YOU GO?

\$2,500 VACATION GIVEAWAY!

Buy a \$10 ticket and get a chance to win
a customized vacation for 2 including airfare!

Travel provided by Litterini Travel

Tickets on sale January 18, 2023- February 20, 2023

COST \$10 TICKET

Drawing February 28, 2023 6:00-7:00pm

Contact Cheri Mack to purchase tickets

Tickets can be purchased following church services

Prayer Concerns

Members: Carl Martelli, Florence Hall, Marge Freeman, Eleanor Arlet, Megan Salinetto Yelley's brother in law, Karren Sites, Tina Dame

Friends & Relatives: Sue Whitaker, Than and Ruthina Veltman, Pastor Michael Weller, Wayne Arlet, Jr., Lisa Myers, Teresa Stacy, niece of Mary Stacy, Helen Barto, Kitty Kistler's mother.

January Birthdays

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

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

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. <https://chup.org/>

Blood Drive

Thank you to everyone who came and donated at the CHUP Blood Drive. We collected 24 units of blood that will in turn help 72 patients in area hospitals. That's really awesome. Thank you!

Please mark your calendar for the next drive scheduled for, Sunday, February 26, 2023, from 8:00 am - 12:30 PM. 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. You are not alone!



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