

Every year I look forward to reading the lessons and selecting the songs for Advent and Christmas Eve services. The Biblical themes are always the same: peace, hope, joy, and love. We light the candles on the Advent wreath to symbolize the coming light of Christ illuminating the encroaching darkness of the winter. The great theologian Paul Tillich, professor at New York's Union Seminary, used to tell preachers they must keep the gospel relevant by writing their sermons while holding the bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. Sometimes the contrast between the daily news and the message of hope spoken through the prophets is great. This year, the sad news of wildfires and reports of hundreds of missing in California dominates the headlines one week only to be eclipsed the next by pictures of mothers holding the hands of their young children, many in diapers, running from canisters of tear gas at the southern border. We need the words of the carol, "tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy" to counterbalance the message of destruction and fear.

Several months ago, Andrea and I watched the movie about Charles Dickens's and the writing of the Christmas Carol. Mid-19th century England was a dark time for the working class. Young children worked long hours in freezing factories. There were no holidays. Christmas was not really celebrated. Dickens book was such a hit; it changed thinking about the holiday. The title of the movie is appropriately "The Man Who Invented Christmas."

C. K. Chesterton wrote an essay in 1909 titled, "The Shop of Ghosts." In this fantasy, he describes a visit to purchase toys at a second hand toy store. He picks out several items to give to needy children and when he goes to pay the shopkeeper will not take any money. When the man asks the shopkeeper why he takes no money, the shopkeeper replies, "I never have, I've always given presents, and I'm too old to stop."

"Good heaven!" says the man, "You must be Father Christmas." The story goes on to describe Father Christmas as looking very ill. Father Christmas admits that he is dying. He is greatly distressed by shoppers who come in and complain that he is too good and too jolly.

Then another man walks into the store. It is Charles Dickens. Dickens asks Father Christmas, "How long have you been dying?" Father Christmas replies, "Since the day I was born."

Dickens says, "You have been dying all the time I knew you, but you don't look any closer to death than the first time I saw you. I understand it now; you will never die."

I imagine the first preachers that proclaimed Jesus's birth were immediately met with incredulity and scorn. This story of good news to all people solely because "unto us a child is born and unto us a son is given" won't survive more than a generation or three. Yet, like the story of Father Christmas who appears to be near death, but never dies, the story of Jesus's nativity never loses its power year-after-year. If the shepherds can come into the narrative once and the tradition of their message extends outward through time, culture, and space, perhaps those who find their way into church only on Christmas Eve will do the same. Enlivened by the message of Jesus's birth and welcomed to the Nativity, the shepherds' place is crucial to the story. They are people who modern folks scoff.

In the end, the best any of us can do on Christmas Eve is to bear witness to the unimaginable and invite all who will listen into the absurd wonder of the moment. It is enough. We are all witnesses casting our lot with the biblical message of hope, peace, joy, and love. Tillich would say Jesus continues to shine into our dark world and the darkness reported in the news cannot overcome it. As our church banners proclaim, "Behold, He Comes."

James Brassard

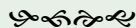
Worship Notes

December 2: First Sunday in Advent. Scripture will be *Isaiah 40:1-11*. Sermon is *Living in Limbo*. Communion will be served.

December 9: Second Sunday of Advent. Scripture will be *Esther 4* and the sermon is titled, "Standing Up for Others."

A reception to celebrate Jackie Lindbeck's 90th birthday will be held in the Atrium following the 11AM service.

December 16: The Third Sunday of Advent. The Book of Lamentations expresses five common voices of individuals trying to deal with traumatic loss. These five voices will be expressed in dramatic dialogue. The timeless message is that anger is necessary, hope is difficult, but being together in community is more important than being of one mind.



Directory Updates!

Please update your directory with the below information:

Gloria Godfrey's new contact information is: 3148 Gracefield Road, Apt 107, Silver Spring, MD 20904, 301-755-0924

Summer Mission Work Camp!

SAVE THE DATE!

Where: Appalachia Service Project in Brenton, West Virginia

Who: Youth 14 and Older and Adults to Repair Homes

When: June 30-July 6, 2019

Contact is Susan Brutout

brutout2004@verizon.net or 301-262-9660 or see her at church

Thank You!

Dear CCPC Staff and Members,

Many thanks, once again, for providing such an inspiring space and good piano for my students' piano recital and reception on October 21. We love the feeling in the Sanctuary as well as the comfort and fun that Dodds Hall provides for the reception. I particularly want to thank Robin Seekford who continues to be a master communicator! She let me know in advance that she'd be on vacation, and set me up with the key and all the connections I needed with the church. And, especially, she contacted me immediately when we needed to reschedule next spring's recital. Her timing was perfect, as I was just getting ready to send out that date to the families and many attendees. Thanks to Rick Osborne for allowing us to play the piano and for assuring me that it would remain unlocked! I appreciated meeting Justin Devine in the parking lot. He offered to make sure I got in. Thanks to Robin, we had that covered, but I felt Justin's generosity and well wishes and it meant a lot. I'm enclosing two checks. One is the agreed upon rate to go towards the maintenance of the piano; the second is the sum of the donations that the families collected to donate to the CCPC music department. We all really love being in your church for our recitals. Wishing you all the best,

Martie Harris

CCPC,

Thank you so much for packing shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. These gifts will go to children all around the world! They will also share God's love with each child. Thanks again for your part in this ministry.

Jireh Place, Bowie Collection Center

Christmas Poinsettia Orders

2018



Christmas poinsettias will be here soon. We will have 7" pots with 30 reds, 6 whites, 6 pinks, and 12 marble. The price is \$14.50 each. Poinsettias will be delivered on Thursday, December 13.

All orders must be in by Monday, December 10th.

You may fill in this form, cut out, and mail with your check to the CCPC Office.

Any questions, please contact Judyann Feinstein at judith.a.glazener@gmail.com or 240-351-4121.

Your Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Given in **memory** of (please print clearly):

Or Given in **honor** of (please print clearly):

7" Poinsettia - Qty. _____ @ \$14.50 each, for a

TOTAL of \$ _____

(Specify color) _____ red _____ white _____ pink _____ marble

Thank you so much for your generous contribution.

The Flower Committee.

Adult Education!

All Classes are Located in the Adult Education Conference Room

Faith Formation at Home: Ideas and Resources

December 2 and December 9

CCPC members share insights related to faith goals, bed-time/meal-time prayers, biblical storytelling, biblical resources and apps, and service disciplines. Teachers: December 2: Gladys Ayuketah and Glory Tataw; December 9: Ann Fleming

No Adult Ed on December 16, 23, and 30

Sweet Sorrow: Coping with Dark Experiences and Emotions

January 6, 13, 20, and 27

CCPC members and guest speakers share strategies to cope with Grief, Anger, Depression, Anxiety, and Addiction—within ourselves and our loved ones. January 6: Guest Speaker-Author of Sweet Sorrow: Sherry Cormier. January 13: Kristin McDermott, Therapist. January 20: Gina Kobe, Psychologist. January 27: Ann Fleming—class focused on Forgiveness

A Traditional Service of Nine Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 23 at 11:00 a.m.

Come join us as scripture and music combine to tell the story of Adam's fall, God's covenant with Abraham, the prophecies of a Messiah, and the birth of a child in a stable.

Children's Christmas Program

Children and youth will have two more practices for this year's program at 10:15am on Sunday, December 2 and December 9. Dress Rehearsal is at 10:00am on December 15. Our program is on December 16 at 10:00am. We are looking forward to putting on a great Nativity program!

Christmas Movie Night Potluck!

Join us on Saturday, December 1 from 5:30 to 8pm in Dodds Hall for a night of fun and fellowship. Bring a bean bag, blanket, and pillows. Please bring a salad or side. Signup with SignUp Genius or let us know what you want to bring. We will be watching "The Star" and plan to have a special visitor from up North!

Women's Retreat!

The Women's Retreat is March 29-31, 2019 at Rhodes Grove in Chambersburg, PA. The theme is: **Ease on Down the Road ... Into the Light**. The leader is Sharon Youngdahl; she is approaching our gathering with a lot of enthusiasm and effort. Please mark your calendars. We will have registration forms at the Potluck to get started. Contact Peggy Oates or Cyd Radden-LeSage with any questions.

Warm Nights

CCPC will participate in the Warm Nights Shelter Program from January 20 to 27, 2019. The program is a collaborative effort of numerous committed church congregations throughout Prince George's County that provide a rotating emergency homeless shelter. It has been in operation since the early 1990s and CCPC was one of the first churches in Bowie to participate in the program. Each week, two churches provide shelter for 25-30 homeless families. The program is managed by Community Crisis Services Incorporated (CCSi).

Previously, the program ran from mid-November through the end of March each year; however, last year, they shifted to a year-round schedule. CCPC, like many of the other participating churches, has agreed to host the shelter for a second week. We will host our second week in May, as we did last year, but this time we will partner with other churches in the area to share the duties. More details will be provided in the spring.

During our week, we will provide the shelter clients with a warm place to stay from 7:00 PM until 6:00 AM. We also provide them with three meals a day. When they arrive, they are greeted with a hot hearty dinner. In the morning, they get breakfast, and we hand them a bagged lunch as they walk out the door.

Successful participation in this program requires CCPC volunteers to perform a variety of duties. There are still many ways you can get involved. You can sign up to prepare a meal, serve as an overnight host, or help setup Dodds Hall on January 20, before the shelter clients arrive. The Mission Committee will purchase the food for the lunches, as we have for the last several years. We ask that volunteers sign up to prepare the lunches; lunches are prepared the night before.

Sign-up sheets and instructions will be in the Atrium. Even if you cannot participate in any of the Warm Nights duties, I encourage you to stop by the church during our Warm Nights week. You will have an opportunity to meet the shelter clients, hear their stories, and see how our giving and caring are impacting their lives.

Paul Sell and Ryan Remley
Warm Nights Coordinators



CCPC Concert Series!

2019 Schedule

SAVE THE DATE!



Sunday, March 3

Nolan King, pianist

Mr. King will present a varied program including masterworks by Bach, Beethoven, Debussy, and Liszt.

Sunday, April 7

Gwendolyn Briley-Strand, actress

"Harriet Tubman: God's Chosen One"

Nationally acclaimed actress Ms. Briley-Strand will present the life and adventures of Harriet Tubman traveling the underground railroad.

Sunday, May 5

Wesley Parrott, organist

Mr. Parrott, organist of Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral and winner of several national organ competitions, will present a varied program.

Sunday, October 6

Csilla Lakatos, cellist; Maureen Cannon, flutist; Rick Osborne, keyboard. The trio will present works by Handel, Massenet, Mozart, and Rachmaninoff.

Sunday, November 3

Bayfield Brass Quintet

The quintet, joined by organist Rick Osborne, will present a program of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque including works by Frescobaldi, Gabrieli, Monteverdi, Vivaldi, and Zipoli.

Sunday, December 8

Celtic Bay & Mary Fitzgerald, harpist

The trio and harpist Mary Fitzgerald will present a program of Seasonal music on the great highland pipes, small Scottish pipes, Percussion, and harp.

For further information, please email: ccpcmusic@verizon.net

CCPC Work Day!

Join us on

**Saturday, December 8th
from 8 AM to Noon**

We need people to help with odd jobs around the church: raking leaves, replacing light bulbs; install two new faucets; and clean out the gutters in the CE Building; etc.

Lunch will be served!

If you are available, we sure could use your help!

Hope to see you there!



Come and Join Us!

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men

~ Colossians 3:23 ~

Christmas Market

Follow Up!

Thank you so much to the following people who helped us with the Alternative Christmas Market.

We sure did appreciate all your help!

Nancy & Dick Arnold; Priscilla Bouic; Jan Bridger; Susan & Bob Brutout; Shirley Cooke; Mikaela & Justin Devine; Steve Donoian; Discovery Circle; Sharon Dixon; Judy Frank; Betty Haeussler; Julia Lehman; Cyd Radden Lesage; Jackie Lindbeck; Betsy McCardle; Men's Saturday Book Club; Peggy & Skip Oates; Deborah & John Rice; Kris Ross; Debbie & Paul Sell; Marge & Charles Tanner; Myrna & Steve Webb; Jim Woods.

Below is a list of the generous donations we received:

Blue Ribbon Project	\$245.00
Bowie Volunteer Fire Department	\$568.00
CCPC Christmas Families	\$562.00
CCPC Honduras Education	\$510.00
CCPC Honduras Mission Worker	\$400.00
CCPC Honduras Water Project	\$1971.00
Cameroon Education	\$225.00
Champ House	\$860.00
Church World Service	\$325.00
Citizens for Local Animal Welfare	\$410.00
Community Crisis Services, Inc.	\$260.00
Dick Arnold's Photos	\$350.00
Habitat for Humanity Projects	\$715.00
Heifer International	\$815.00
Literacy at the Well	\$585.00
Medical Benevolence Foundation	\$1295.00
Operation Christmas Child	\$189.00
Pets for Vets	\$725.00
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance	\$915.00
Soup Kitchen	\$145.09
United Campus Ministry	\$511.00

GRAND TOTAL \$12,581.09

Christian Community Presbyterian Church



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Bowie, MD 20715
Phone (301) 262-6008
Web: <http://ccpc.bowiemd.org>
E-mail: ccpcbowie@verizon.net



CCPC, the first Protestant church in Levitt Bowie, was born from a passion for Christian mission in the local community, and this focus continues.

*Our Mission: To worship God, to grow in faith and community,
and to place our gifts in the service of Jesus Christ.*

Please remember CCPC in your will.



Belair Cooperative Nursery School

The school is a non-profit, non-sectarian, and non-partisan organization.
It's located in the CE Building of Christian Community Presbyterian Church.

Call 301-464-5782 or Email info@belaircoop.org

www.belaircoop.org



Imagine - Yoga & Wellness Center



Located in the CE building, offers yoga and a variety of wellness programs to CCPC members and the community. For more information, visit www.ImagineThePlace.com, call 443-510-6308, or e-mail info@ImagineThePlace.com. Scholarships available.

