



This is the time of year when publications put out their “Best of the Year” lists. The Sunday “Post” listed 21 must see movies. I have seen two of them: “The Butler” and “Gravity.” I did read five of the top 20 non-fiction works. I think two of them are over rated. I was unfamiliar with any of the top five TV series. None of my favorite shows: “Baseball Tonight,” Jim Cramer’s “Mad Money,” and “The Colbert Report” made the list. An obvious oversight.

Today, “Time” magazine announced their “Person of the Year.” Twenty years ago when Henry Luce’s “Time” was the most influential weekly in America, it was quite an honor to be named the year’s most news worthy individual. Luce liked to choose institutions and individuals who changed the world. Not surprisingly, past winners have ranged from the famous to the infamous. This year’s winner was Pope Francis; a man the publication says disrupted the world with his message of compassion.

The new Pope has made a splash in his brief tenure. The first Pope from Latin America, Francis has quite naturally a different take on globalization and on economic doctrine than his European predecessors. Having served among the poor and marginalized, he has witnessed the downside of market forces. He knows poverty and exploitation. Although he had not deviated from classic Catholic social teachings, he brings a fresh voice in a world where growing inequality is growing along with indifference to those that suffer. His first papal encyclical titled the “Joy of the Gospel” criticizes a “deified market” and questions the “naïve trust society places in the goodness of those wielding economic power.”

Columnist Michael Gerson writes that “Francis is quite clear that the Christian faith is not an ideology; it stands in judgment of all ideologies, including the ones we justify in the name of freedom.” The editors gave him the award for refocusing the world on the compassion that we know in Christ. We open worship this week with the words of Mary: “He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent away empty.” For those that think Francis is radical, I refer you to the gospels.

The magazine also lists the figures on their short list. What a group. “Time” admitted they were chosen because they “disrupted the system.” It includes local boy made bad Edward Snowden (he attended high school in Anne Arundel) who spilled state secrets which have greatly damaged our country. Syrian President Bashar Assad made the list for his atrocities and perhaps his staying power. Then there is Senator Ted Cruz who epitomizes a Congress that ranks as the least effective in history. All three also-rans seem to believe that the way to save society is to first tear it down.

Advent is a time where we look to God and engage in quiet reflection, looking for a fulfillment we cannot cause or hasten. A child arrives to poor Jewish parents in a humble stable located in an out of the way town. The baby’s parents patiently and obediently listen for the

Word and follow the strange course that God lays out for them. It is an old story that we repeat every year. We do so not only because the story is true, but because it is an odd truth, a strange truth that runs counter to our expectations, so that we must repeat it lovingly again and again. In this story, we locate Christ --- our eternal truth. It is an honor to have a humble servant like Pope Francis telling the humble, yet powerful story of Jesus. May Francis continue to disrupt the world with the compassion we first saw in Christ.

Merry Christmas,

James Brassard



Worship Notes

December 15: Third Sunday in Advent. The children's program, *Letters from Santa*, will take place during the 10 am service. Following the program, the children will go to class. After worship, the visitor from the North Pole will be here for pictures. Bring your camera. The homily is about patience. Advent is about waiting, but it is also about dealing with disappointment due to unmet expectations. Text is James 5:7-10 and Matthew 11:2-11

December 22: Fourth Sunday in Advent. This is Music Sunday with special pre-service music beginning at 9:45 am. This is a family-friendly service and children will remain in the Sanctuary. The homily will be about the faith of Joseph. In Matthew's gospel, Joseph is the one whom the angel visits to declare that a Savior is coming. Joseph never speaks, but his actions speak volumes about the nature and character of faith. What can we learn from the man who quietly manages chaos?



DEACON'S CORNER

This is the **35th** in a **series** of articles about living well by considering the host of things we can change in our lives, our homes and our surroundings that can make our lives healthier, happier, and safer. Special thanks to Joy Bible, former Moderator of the Board of Deacons, for sharing her wisdom and expertise through the Deacon's Corner. We will be preparing a complete set of Deacon's Corner articles to share with CCPC.

"Every happening, great and small, is a parable whereby God speaks to us, and the art of life is to get the message." (Malcolm Muggeridge) As we enter this wonderful season, a time for hope and joy, we also bring to the season memories. Some memories fill us with joy of past Christmases, special people in our lives; some memories are of lost loves and time gone by.

There are many seasons in our lives. It is good to note that through the good times and the bad, you CAN CELEBRATE the seasons of your life. One of the greatest gifts of our faith is the knowledge that God is with us. When storms of sorrow would bring your world down, He is there. When you see the beauty of the holiday, with lights, music, and children's laughter, He shares your joy.

As I have mentioned before, studies have shown that people of faith not only tend to live longer, but prayer and meditation have a great calming effect when you are stressed. At this time of the year, it is important to surround yourself with friends and family. Get involved with community projects and church activities. It is important to realize that our remembrances and celebrations anchor our life in the love of God and the season that celebrates His creation. We may not always be able to control how we feel, but we can always control how we respond and how we react to how we feel. When we become overwhelmed with emotions of the season, we can choose a positive response.

It is important to remember that you are not alone. You have a host of connections that you can enjoy, including your church family and friends, and above all, you can enjoy communion with God. You can choose to reach out to your family and friends. You can choose to embrace the celebrations of the season, such as concerts, holiday light shows, and giving to those in need. Open your heart, rather than closing it. Embrace the quiet contentment of solitude and peace. Take some time to reflect on Advent. If the season's hustle and bustle begins to overwhelm you, set aside five minutes a day for quiet reflection and prayer. Take a break in the middle of the rush of the holiday chaos to rest, reflect, and renew yourself. If you allow it, you can find great majesty and beauty in this season. Beyond all the holiday commercialism lie a deep mystery of God's love and the gift of his Son. Like Mary, ponder the mysteries of life in your heart. Be practical, make lists, and check them off one by one. Make positive choices and make room for God in this season. Focus on the beauty and holiness of the season. Lighten your heart with the knowledge of God's love surrounding you. Try to let your heart sing with wonder and belief in things that cannot be seen.

Merry Christmas!

Music Sunday

Next Sunday, December 22 will be Music Sunday!
Don't miss out on CCPC's amazing Christmas Music this year!
This is a kid-friendly service, so children will stay in the service.

There will be special music starting at 9:45

Soloists/Duets/Small Instrumental Ensembles

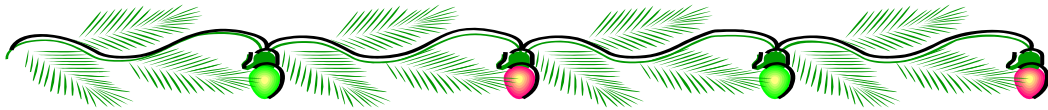
Christmas Medley with CCPC Youth Orchestra
arr. K. Clemence

I Saw Three Ships with Ekklesia
arr. L. Aquilina

Personent Hodie with Celebration Choir
arr. J. Rutter

Angels We Have Heard on High with Clinquant
and others . . .

Join us early so you won't miss out on anything!



Christmas Eve Worship Services

There will be two worship services on Christmas eve
6:00 pm and 8:30 pm

Dramatic Reading — *What Child Is This?*

Homily — *Beyond Coziness*

Scriptures:

Matthew 1:18—25 The Birth of Jesus

Matthew 2:1—6 The Visit of the Magi

Matthew 2:7—12 Home by Another Way

6 PM — Program for children after the children's message

8:30 PM — Candlelight Communion

Warm Nights

CCPC will be participating in the Warm Nights Shelter Program from January 19th to 26th. The program is a collaborative effort of numerous committed church congregations throughout Prince George's County that provide a rotating emergency shelter from mid- November through then end of March each year. It has been in operation since the early 1990s and CCPC was the first church in Bowie to participate in the program.

During our week, we will provide a warm place to stay from 7:00 PM until about 6:00 AM for 30-35 homeless people. We also will provide them with three meals a day. When the shelter clients 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 have been a few changes in the program that make it easier for us. For example, we no longer have to launder linens or transport the cots and equipment to the next church. However, there are still many ways you can get involved. You can sign up to prepare a meal, serve as an overnight host or help set up Dodds Hall on January 19th before the shelter clients arrive.

The Mission Committee will purchase the food for the lunches, as we did last year. We ask that volunteers sign up to prepare the lunches. Sign up sheets and instructions are available in the atrium starting on Sunday, December 22nd. Even if you cannot participate in any of the Warm Nights duties, we 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.

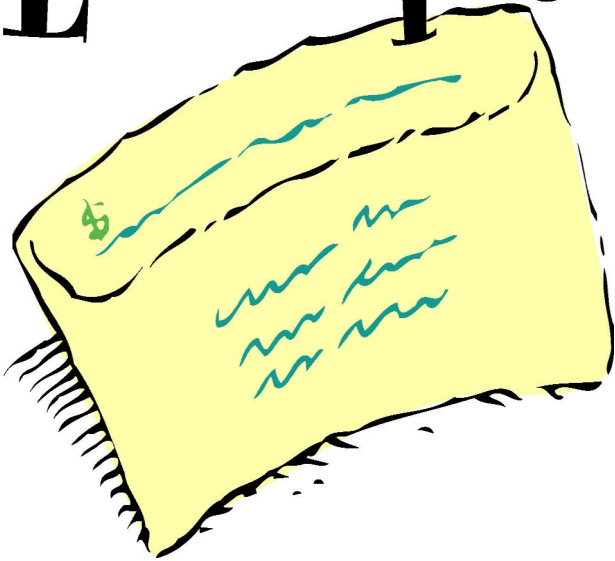
Warm Nights Coordinators

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970-682-8378 (Irene)

Barry and Audrey Bahler
babahler@verizon.net
301-352-0786



Offering Envelopes



The 2014 offering envelopes for children, youth and adults are available in the atrium.

If you would like envelopes and don't see your name, please let us know by signing the paper on the table.

If you will not use your envelopes or plan on donating electronically, please let us know.

You may always change your mind and request envelopes mid year.

If you have any questions, please contact Marie Farney at mpfarney@verizon.net or 301-430-0350.

Christmas Post Office

The CCPC Post Office is now open!

Please put your cards in the mail box on the table in the Atrium (or in the overflow box if the mail box is full) and the youth will sort them.

Since people will be picking up their cards, please do not include cards for folks who are out of town, but rather use the US Post Office to send cards to them.





Poinsettia

Honor and Memory Tree

Each year, we have a lovely poinsettia tree in the Sanctuary with poinsettias given by the congregation in honor or in memory of family and friends.

The tree will be up on Sunday, December 22 and the list of contributors will be in the Christmas Eve program. This year, the tree will stay up until December 29 and after the tree comes down, you can take your poinsettia home with you!

The cost is \$12.50 for a 7-inch poinsettia.
Order forms will be available December 1st. You may place your order in the box in the Atrium or in the Flower Committee mailbox in the office.



Gadabouts

The January get together will be held at Marge Clark's home on January 7 at 12 noon. Lunch will be Marge's treat. Bring your appetites.
Call Marge if you have any questions: 410-451-0833.

Directory Updates

December 2013

Goldia Bullock
18747 Wexford Terrace
Jamica, NY 11432

Karen Cable
kic34@comcast.net

Patty Fox
2205 Lackawanna Street
Adelphi, MD 20783

Hal Pease
dph510@gmail.com

January Caller

Please note there will be only one Caller going out in January. It will be mailed out around the 17th.

**The deadline for all articles is
9 AM Tuesday, January 14.**

Any questions please call the office.

Christian Community Presbyterian Church



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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.*



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 Ann@ImagineThePlace.com. Scholarships available.

