

December 2019

CHURCH STAFF

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Glory of the Lord

By Ken Kovacs

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid...." Luke 2:8-10

Every year, I wonder what it was like for the shepherds to receive the divine announcement. "For you to you is born this day... a Savior." What was it like to be overwhelmed by the

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INSIDE

Growing in Grace: A Christmas Carol on Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. Then join for our Advent Sermon Series at 10:30 a.m. See page 3.

Advent Service and Activities: Join us for the four Sundays of Advent to prepare for Christmas. See page 4.

Faith at Home: Learn about activities and at-home family resources for Advent. See page 5.

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"Glory of the Lord"

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heavenly host? What did they see? What did they feel? Fear? Terror? Awe? How long did it last? I am fascinated by these shepherds and the revelation given to them. They had an *experience of the holy*, an *encounter* with the divine. They participated in the power and grace and awesomeness of the Spirit of God unleashed upon the world, gospeling the world in the flesh, calling them—and us—to embark on a journey of cosmic dimensions. That journey begins with the shepherds. They show us the way.

As Luke describes it, we could say that the shepherds had a mystical experience. An encounter with mystery—and mystery, because it's a mystery (not a puzzle) is never completely knowable. It can't be measured, analyzed, or verified. Only experienced.

The church has never done well with the mystical. Cultural historian José Argüelles (1939-2011) sees a "dictatorship of reason" in the modern era of Western culture that "banished mysticism as a branch of the insane." The mystical is often repressed. However, Albert Einstein (1879-1955) insisted, "The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science. Whoever does not know it and can no longer wonder, no longer marvel, is as good as dead."

What if the shepherds were mystics? Jewish theologian Abraham Heschel (1907-1972) defined mysticism as "radical amazement." And wasn't

this Mary's response to what the shepherds' experienced, radical amazement? Maybe she was a mystic, too. Radical awe. "Awe is the beginning of wisdom," Heschel claimed. "Awe precedes faith." Not belief, not reason, but awe. Leads to praise, which "precedes faith." Awe is the beginning of wisdom. The fear experienced in awe and terror "is not the fear of guilt" or of being attacked, but "a fear of WOW! – a reverential fear based on a realization of the greatness of our existence, of our being included in the amazing twenty-billion-year drama that is the universe." It's the realization that the Creator of this universe and the source of existence encounters us, overwhelms us with love, and faces us—literally—in the flesh, in the birth of a Son who came for us to know once and for all that we are deeply loved, beloved sons and daughters of God, the objects of God's joy and passion!

So how do we respond to this kind of awe? What do we "do" with it? Maybe we don't "do" anything with it. It "does" us. And shapes us. And loves us. As the ancients knew, there is only one suitable response to mystery—to *kneel*. T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) said it best. In *Four Quartets*, he said *this* is what the journey of life is about, *this* is what faith is about, *this* is how we receive and respond to the mystery of the Incarnation. He said:

You are not here to verify,

Instruct yourself, inform curiosity

Or carry report. You are here to kneel....

Yes we are here to kneel.✝

Annual Cookie Walk

December 15 following Worship

Take part in the 2019 Catonsville Presbyterian Annual Cookie Walk. You and your family can bake six to seven dozen cookies and donate them to the Cookie Walk. Come to Cookie Walk and purchase cookies! All proceeds from the Cookie Walk benefit the Santi School Project. Santi School Project focuses entirely on training teachers to help improve childhood literacy. Santi School Project designed a training program to give teachers in rural areas of Nepal the techniques and resources they need to get their students excited about reading. Sign up today at www.signupgenius.com/go/5080E4DAEAF2BA0FE3-cpcannual. For questions contact Alison Enokian at aenokian@gmail.com. Thank you for your support!

Growing in Grace

Adult Education Opportunities

Join us on Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. in the library. Childcare is provided.

A Christmas Carol (December 1, 8, 15, 22)

Charles Dickens' beloved "ghost" story first appeared in 1843, to critical acclaim. Since then, generations have come to love the story and today it's an essential part of the Christmas season. "The beauty and blessing of the story," G. K. Chesterton said, "lie in the great furnace of real happiness that glows through Scrooge and everything around him. ...Whether the Christmas visions would or would not convert Scrooge, they convert us." This Advent, we'll explore why Dickens wrote his novella, focus on the actual text, and highlight the implicit Christian themes running through the Carol, with a special focus on how a human life is transformed, and for what end. We invite you (re)read the story; a free online version is available at www.literatureproject.com/xmas-carol. Led by Ken Kovacs.



Advent Sermon Series: Walking in the Light

Advent, the beginning of the liturgical year, begins in the dark, but we don't stay there. Each Sunday in Advent we gradually increase our awareness of the coming birth of light—Immanuel, "God with us." Come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!

Advent I on December 1

First Light (Isaiah 2:1-5 & Romans 13:11-14)

Advent II on December 8

On That Day (Isaiah 11:1-10 & Matthew 3:1-12)

Advent III on December 15

Singing All the Way (Isaiah 35:1-10 & Matthew 11:2-11)

Advent IV on December 22

Look! (Isaiah 7:10-16 & Matthew 1:18-25)

*But God's own descent
Into flesh was meant
As a demonstration
That the supreme merit*

*Lay in risking spirit
In substantiation.
Spirit enters flesh
And for all it's worth*

*Charges into earth
In birth after birth
ever fresh and fresh.
-Robert Frost (1874-1963)*



Advent Service and Activities

December 1, Advent Begins

Worship at 10:30 am

BIG Advent Feast at 5:30 pm

Everyone is invited to join the BIG Advent Feast. Gather in fellowship hall from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Dinner and salad provided, please bring a dessert.

December 8, Advent II

Worship at 10:30 am

Organ Recital at 4 pm

Douglas Heist will be presenting an organ recital at 4:00 p.m. The recital will include music for the Advent and Christmas season as well as some great, varied pieces by Bach, Couperin, Vierne, and Gawthrop. It will showcase the varied sounds and colors that can be heard from our newly refurbished instrument at Catonsville Presbyterian. There is no admission charge. Please plan to attend and enjoy this afternoon of great music.

December 14, Christmas Caroling

Caroling at 3 pm

All ages are invited to spread holiday cheer by singing carols with our Charlestown and homebound residents. We'll leave from fellowship hall at 3 p.m. If you are meeting us at Charlestown, we'll be at Caton Woods at 3:30 p.m.

December 15, Advent III

Christmas Carol Service at 10:30 am

Cookie Walk at 11:45 am

Blue Christmas Service 7 pm

A worship service full of music of the season, followed by the Cookie Walk in fellowship hall. In the evening come with your sadness and sorrow and join us for a peaceful worship service of music, prayer, and silence. Christmas can be a painful time for many. Know that you are not alone.

December 22, Advent IV

Worship at 10:30 am

Come and join us on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. Education hour begins at 9:00 a.m. and we gather for worship at 10:30 a.m.

December 24, Christmas Eve

Family Service at 4 pm

Candle Service at 8 pm

Join us at 4 p.m. for this always-wonderful interactive and intergenerational worship service. Arrive early for pre-worship music featuring our youth musicians. Then in the evening at 8 p.m., come for a joyous service of wonder and light. "All is calm, all is bright."

Children, Youth and Family Ministries

Youth News and Faith at Home

Church School Schedule

Second Sunday December 8

No Church School on December 29

Second Sunday will meet on Sunday, December 8. Following the Children's Message during worship, children ages 4–7 will leave the sanctuary and head to the Dragons classroom with Ms. Donna and Ms. Cathy for Bible stories and crafts. Parents will meet children there after worship. Church school and adult education ministries will have a holiday break on Sunday, December 29. We will resume in the New Year on Sunday, January 5.

Middle School Youth Night

December 8 from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Come and make Christmas cards for our homebound members from 6 to 7:30 p.m. We'll share some holiday games together too.

Church School Mission

Donate Gifts through December 15

We are invited to share the joy of the season with

our mission partners at McKim Community Center by contributing new, unwrapped gifts (sports equipment, craft kits, board games) for the Children's Christmas Party. These can be placed under the tree in the sanctuary through December 15. The McKim Center offers a variety of programs including sports, summer camps, after school, and community events in the Jonestown section of East Baltimore. It has been dedicated to providing academic, physical, social and spiritual growth to the young people in its community since 1821.

Family Christmas Eve Service

Youth Musicians and Worship Leaders Needed for Christmas Eve

One of our loveliest services of the year is our Family Christmas Eve 4 p.m. worship as children and youth share their gifts of leadership in word, drama, instrumental music, and song. If you are interested in participating, please contact Dorothy Boulton by December 8 at dboulton@catonsvillepres.org.

Family Resources for the Christmas Season

- *A Manger Miracle* Christmas Activity Book is available for ages 3–7. We'll distribute these during church school on December 1 and 10.
- A *Faithful Families* Advent Countdown Calendar will be emailed home at the end of November. We'll also have some printed copies on the Christian Education table in the education wing hallway.
- We still have a few copies of *Faithful Families, Creating Sacred Moments at Home*. This book by Traci Smith contains excellent suggestions for Advent/Christmas traditions for families of all ages. If you would like a book, or information on how to order one, please see Dorothy Boulton.
- We hope you'll join your church family for our all-ages Advent/Christmas activities. Please be sure to look for the information about The BIG Advent Feast on December 1, Christmas Caroling on December 14, the Cookie Walk on December 15, and Christmas Eve worship on Dec 24.

Christmas Gift Ideas for Young Children

Growing in God's Love A Story Bible is a new publication by two excellent Presbyterian educators Elizabeth Caldwell and Carol Wehrheim. The 150 stories contain inclusive language and illustrations, and children are prompted to hear, see, and act through a series of thought-provoking questions. It is available beginning December 3 from Amazon for \$18.34.

Puerto Rico Mission Trip

On November 11, our Catonsville Presbyterian Church Work Team of twenty-one members arrived at El Gauacio, a Presbyterian Disaster Assistance camp located 2.5 hours from San Juan, capital of Puerto Rico. The goal of the mission trip was to help friends still recovering from Hurricane Maria in San Sebastian. After arriving the group reported that the roads were treacherous but they continued to make it through, and all in all, they felt blessed for the good weather and beautiful scenery. Once settled everyone got to work on painting roofs, hauling debris, and repairing homes.

Throughout the week of November 11-18, our Catonsville Presbyterian Church Work Team continued to stay busy working on repairs in Puerto Rico. Fortunately the group managed to have some fun in between all the hard work including enjoying a local band, attending a beautiful worship service, watching the sunrise, praying on the hill, making new friends and leaving their imprint. View more photographs from the mission trip at www.catonsvillepres.org/galleries/puerto-rico-mission-trip





After an inspiring week in Puerto Rico, our Catonsville Presbyterian Church Work Team returned home on Monday, November 18, 2019. Our travelers on this important mission trip included:

- Kim Blay
- Dorothy Boulton
- Peggy Carr
- Mark Dunham
- Eric Ebersole
- Gail Ebersole
- Matthew Gresick
- Nancy and Bill Henderson

- Jennifer Hutton
- Kenneth Kovacs
- Susan Krehbiel and Norman Lazarus
- Megan Long
- Maureen and Stephen Parkhurst
- Charre Symms
- Cheryl Thurber
- Josephine Titanji
- Laurie and Andy White

Thanks to everyone for your continued prayers and support during this mission trip!

Scouts Update

By Glenda K. Johnson
Chartered Organization Representative

Grounds Clean Up

The annual fall grounds cleanup will be held on Saturday, November 30. Come between 9:30 and 11:30 to help clean up the grounds before winter. Bring a rake, gloves, and wear appropriate outerwear for the weather that day. If available, please bring a tarp and or a blower to make the job easier. We appreciate the help!

Troop 306 Boy Scouts and Pack 306 Cub Scouts will be working on this project. However everyone is invited to help out during this work morning. Light refreshments will be available at the end of the morning. Trustees will help direct workers throughout the grounds during the morning. Please come join Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts in this important effort.

Boy Scout Tree Sales Begins

Following the grounds cleanup project on November 30, the annual Christmas Tree Sale begins. There will again be a variety of tree types and sizes for you to choose your favorite one. Sales times are on Mondays thru Thursdays from 6 to 8 pm, Fridays from 6 to 9 pm, Saturdays from 9am to 9 pm, and Sundays from 12 to 8 pm. Come early to get your best selection!

Cub Scouts Final Popcorn Sales

Cub Scout Pack 306 has a selection of popcorn available for their final sale weekend of November 30 and December 1. The scouts will have a sales table near the tree sale area during the afternoons on both days.

Christmas at Sea

By Lee Van Koten

We will again this year be collecting Christmas gift boxes for seafarers visiting the Port of Baltimore. We are doing things slightly differently this year. Instead of assembling and wrapping the boxes at the Big Advent Feast, they will be wrapped after the church service on December 8.

The Mission Committee will provide a paperback New Testament, warm hat and socks, and pen and pencil for each box. Each family is asked to bring a box with 8-10 of the following items, most of which can typically be purchased at Dollar Tree:

- Warm gloves
- Hand warmers
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- Deodorant
- Hand lotion
- Shampoo
- Shave cream
- Razors
- Nail clippers
- Small notebook
- Playing cards
- Sudoku book
- Postcards of Baltimore
- Lip gloss (i.e., Blistex or Chapstik)
- Warm neck scarf

Please items place in a standard size shoe box. If you don't one, the Mission Committee will have some available. Also do remember to leave space for the additional items that will be added to the boxes before wrapping. And please, no food. Thank you for your help and spirit of giving during this holiday season!

Adopt a Turkey for Grace AME Church

By Nancy Henderson

"Feed My Sheep". Thanks in part to the donations of food and money by CPC members and friends and the hard work of many volunteers, Grace AME Church was able to provide a full Thanksgiving meal to over 200 families. In addition, many more were able to obtain food as part of Grace's monthly Maryland Food Bank "food drop". A big thank you to all who contributed.



Family Child Care Center News

By Michelle Hepner

We recently hosted a Messy Art Family Fun Night in November to benefit Kids Helping Hopkins as they celebrate their 25th anniversary. It was a big success! Our holiday program will take place on December 9 for the two and three-year-olds and on December 10 for the four-year-olds. In addition, our whole school plans to see The Snowman at the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra on December 6.

Birdhouse Building

This November, middle school youth came together to build and paint birdhouses at the church. Wait till they are hung in the woods—they're going to be awesome!



Session Meeting Highlights

The Session is a body of fifteen members, elected by the congregation and ordained as ruling elders, who provide leadership for our congregation. Following are highlights of the regular monthly Session meeting of November 6, 2019.

- For our opening devotions, Ruling Elder Craig Hornig read a personal statement about the current social and political climate, with the observation that the Gospel is a political statement, and we are called to live and speak our faith in our daily lives. He gave as an example Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was a modern day prophet, martyr and saint. He followed the reading with prayer.
- The Finance Committee reported that while giving and expenses are generally on track for the year, there is a current deficit of approximately \$14,000 as of October 31, 2019. An appeal will be made to the congregation to help close the budget gap by year end.
- Session approved a recommendation from the Finance Committee to take \$150,000 from the Envision Fund for the Trustees to use for the immediate replacement of the church roof

before further damage occurs from the leakage. Still leaving adequate funds for the Envision Fund board to disburse as grants in 2020.

- The Outreach Committee will conduct an orientation meeting for prospective new members on Saturday, November 23, 2019. New members will be received and welcomed at a worship service in December.

Session recognizes the need to continually communicate with our membership, and we welcome your suggestions for communication exchange. Session member contact information is listed in the Church Directory, so it is easy to communicate directly with your church leaders. Take a few minutes to send a message to a Session member, the pastors, or the church office, and let us know what you think. We want to hear from you!

*—David Hutton, Clerk of Session
(dhutton1@verizon.net)*

Our Financial Resources

We rely on everyone to support what God is doing through this congregation. The vitality of this ministry is secured by God's grace and funded by the faithfulness and commitment of God's people. We are counting on the ongoing generosity of our members and friends. Thank you! —Keith Glennan, Finance Committee

Actual income as of November 11, 2019:	\$ 486,086
Actual expense as of November 11, 2019:	\$-501,029
Total:	\$ -14,943

Stewardship Pledge

By Laurie White and Brad Peercy

Thank you for your continuous generosity in supporting CPC and our ministries. We ask you to prayerfully consider pledging this year to help the Finance Committee plan for an exciting new 2020. Giving is a tangible expression of your connection to God, our community and the wider world. Every gift makes a difference!

It is only with gratitude that life becomes rich! – Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Catonsville Presbyterian Calendar

EVERY WEEK

SUNDAYS

8:40 a.m. Youth Choir, Grades 3 and up, Music Rm
9 a.m. Church School, Grade 3-High School
9 a.m. Child Care and Social Time, Infants-Grade 2
9 a.m. Adult Education, Library
10:30 a.m. Worship, Sanctuary

MONDAYS

7-9 p.m. Martial Arts, Fellowship Hall
8-10 p.m. Scottish Dancers, Gym

TUESDAYS

9-11 a.m. Al-Anon, France Room
10 a.m. Needles Group, Library
7-9 p.m. Charm City Dancers, Gym
7-9:30 p.m. Martial Arts, Fellowship Hall

WEDNESDAYS

7 p.m. Cub Scouts, Gym, SR, RS Rooms

THURSDAYS

5:30-6:30 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous, Library
6:45-7:30 p.m. Handbell Choir, Upper Music Room
7-9:30 p.m. Kung Fu, Fellowship Hall
7:35-9 p.m. Chancel Choir, Music Room
7:30-9 p.m. Boy Scouts

UPCOMING THIS MONTH

SUNDAY, December 1 [Advent](#)

5:30-7 p.m. BIG Advent Feast, Fellowship Hall

MONDAY, December 2

7:30 a.m. Adult Education Committee
9:30 a.m. PW Morning Circle, France Room

TUESDAY, December 3

12 p.m. GA 2020 Com on Local Arrangements,
Worship Team, Lib

WEDNESDAY, December 4

7 pm Session, Library

THURSDAY, December 5

7-9 p.m. Boy Scout Com, Library

SATURDAY, December 7

10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tai Chi, Gym

SUNDAY, December 8 [Advent II](#)

12:30 p.m. Prep for Afternoon Recital, Sanc
4-6 p.m. Organ Recital by Doug Heist, Sanc
6-7:30 p.m. Middle School Youth, FH

MONDAY, December 9

6 p.m. Contemplative Prayer, France Rm
7-8 p.m. Child Care Center Christmas Program,
Sanctuary and Cookies and Punch, FH
7 p.m. Envision Fund Task Force

TUESDAY, December 10

7-8 p.m. Child Care Center Christmas Program,
Sanctuary and Cookies and Punch, FH

WEDNESDAY, December 11

7 p.m. Child Care Council, Conf Rm
7:30 p.m. Trustees, Library

THURSDAY, December 12

7-9 p.m. Cub Scout Committee, Library

SATURDAY, December 14

3 p.m. Christmas Caroling

SUNDAY, December 15 [Advent III](#)

10:30 a.m. Christmas Concert Service, Sanctuary
11:45 a.m. Cookie Walk, FH
7 p.m. Blue Christmas Worship, Sanctuary

WEDNESDAY, December 18

2 p.m. Com on Preparation for Ministry, Library
7-8 p.m. Cub Scout Pack Holiday Party, FH

THURSDAY, December 19

7:30-9 p.m. Dismantling Racism Group, Library

SATURDAY, December 21

10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tai Chi, Gym

SUNDAY, December 22 [Advent IV](#)

10:30 am: Worship, Sanctuary

MONDAY, December 23

6 p.m. Contemplative Prayer, France Rm

TUESDAY, December 24 [Christmas Eve](#)

4:00 p.m. Family Service
8:00 p.m. Candlelight Service

WEDNESDAY, December 25 Christmas Day
Church Offices Closed

THURSDAY, December 26
No Bible Study

SUNDAY, December 29 First Sunday after Christmas
No Youth Choir, Grades 3 and Up, Music Rm
No Church School, Gr 3-High Sch
No Adult Education, Library
10:30 a.m. Worship, Sanctuary
10:15 a.m. Child Care, Infants-Gr 2

WEDNESDAY, December 31 New Year's Eve

Sermon Reminder

Text and Audio Recording

Now, both the text and audio recording of the sermon will be up on our website each week. You can read, listen, or download the file to listen at another time. Visit www.catonsvillepres.org/sermons to read or listen to Catonsville Presbyterian Church sermons.

Next Messenger

Deadline December 15, 2019

Send your content for inclusion in the *Messenger* to Communications Consultant and Messenger Editor Lisa Roca at lroca@catonsvillepres.org.

THE Messenger

Our Mission

We seek to find and share God's calling for this community of faith through worship, fellowship and service.

Catonsville Presbyterian Church

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[Twitter.com/catonsvillepres](https://twitter.com/catonsvillepres)

Church Office Hours: Monday-Friday,
8:30 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
office@catonsvillepres.org

Child Care Center

(P) 410-747-4581, (F) 410-744-5168
www.cpcfccc.org



We Choose
Welcome

pcusa.org/WeChooseWelcome #WeChooseWelcome

