

December 18, 2020

## Church Staff

### Pastor

Rev. Kenneth E. Kovacs, Ph.D.

### Associate Pastor

Rev. Dorothy L. Boulton, M.Div.

### Director of Music

Greg Knauf, D.M.A.

### Interim Organist

Jason Kissel, D.M.A.

### Communications Consultant and Messenger Editor

Lisa Roca

### Membership Secretary

Peggy Carr

### Administrative Assistant

Shirley Winters

### Bookkeeper

Virginia Daiger

### Sexton

Bernard Lawson

### Child Care Center Director

Michelle Hepner

### Child Care Center Assistant Director

Heather Hollandsworth

### Child Care Center Office Manager

Ashley Graham



## The Work of Christmas

By Kenneth Kovacs

Many years, at the close of our Christmas Concert Service, ordinarily the Third Sunday in Advent and the same day as the Cookie Walk, we read the short poem “The Work of Christmas” by the pastor, theologian, social activist, and mystic Howard Thurman (1899-1981). I was not aware of this piece before coming to CPC and have really come to love it and appreciate it.

Thurman has been in my thoughts a lot this season. I’m slowly working through a remarkable biography of his life that was just released several months ago, *Howard Thurman and the Dishinherited: A Religious Biography* by Paul Harvey. (It would make a good Christmas gift.) Thurman lived a fascinating life. Raised in the rural South, subjected to the indecencies of Jim Crow, he was a graduate of Morehouse College, Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, and Boston University. He was professor in the Religion Department at Howard University and was a prolific writer, best known for his book *Jesus and the Dishinherited* (1949). He traveled to India, met with Mahatma Gandhi, and brought his nonviolent resistance movement back to the United States. Thurman’s ideas directly influenced Martin Luther

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# The Work of Christmas

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King, Jr. In fact, Thurman's deep, contemplative-mystical experience of the Christian life had a direct impact upon King. Thurman was pastor, friend, and mentor to King. As we approach what will be a very different and, for many, a deeply sad and troubling Christmas, we are given an invitation to pause and remember what this season is truly all about, to remember why Jesus was born into this world, and to remember the work to which we have been called as followers of Jesus. For the work of Christmas continues in us and through us.

*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the kings and princes are home,  
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
the work of Christmas begins:  
to find the lost,  
to heal the broken,  
to feed the hungry,  
to release the prisoner,  
to rebuild the nations,  
to bring peace among the people,  
to make music in the heart.*

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## Session Meeting Highlights

The coronavirus pandemic has not stopped the work of the church! Your Session has been meeting more frequently lately, and using Zoom to meet online in view of the coronavirus pandemic restrictions. Following are highlights from the Session meeting on December 2, 2020.

- The Finance Committee reports that the church finances are in a good position as we approach the end of the year, with active online giving, good response to the Stewardship campaign so far, support of special offerings, and controlled expenses, leading to an expectation of a minimal deficit by year's end. Appreciation is expressed to the congregation for their continued financial support of our ministry. Any members and friends who have not yet pledged may do so online using the link on the church's web page, [www.catonsvillepres.org](http://www.catonsvillepres.org).
- Session voted to call the Annual Meeting of the Congregation for Sunday, January 31, 2021, following worship. At this meeting the Operating Budget will be reviewed with the congregation, the pastors' terms of call will be approved, and church officers will be elected. The meeting will be conducted virtually on Zoom.
- Session received five new members into the life of CPC at this meeting. Louann Tracy, Marcus Tracy, Stephanie Hargest, and Jeff and Michelle Lipinski will be welcomed by the congregation in worship at a date to be determined.
- Our policy on in-person worship and use of the buildings was reviewed, and in consideration of current conditions and predictions for the coronavirus pandemic over the next several months, Session extended the current policy through March 31, 2021. This means that worship will continue online via Facebook and YouTube, and the church building and church house will be closed for all uses except the Child Care Center and limited administrative functions.

Session recognizes the need to continually communicate with our membership, and we welcome your suggestions for communication exchange. 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



# Advent and Christmas

## Blue Christmas Service

**Monday, December 21, at 7 p.m.**

Our Blue Christmas Service will be on the longest night of the year, Monday, December 21, at 7 p.m. This year in particular we need a time to sit with our sadness, sorrow, and grief, acknowledge our feelings and emotions, and find God's light shining in darkness. This service will be shared on Facebook Live.

**Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24  
Family at 4 p.m. Candlelight at 8 p.m.**

Our traditional Christmas Eve services will be pre-recorded and premiered on Facebook and YouTube. The Family Service will be at 4 p.m. and the Candlelight Service will be at 8 p.m.

**New! Zoom Worship  
December 27 and January 3**

Worship on these Sundays will take place at the usual time but on Zoom (and not on Facebook or YouTube). We'll share the Zoom link several days in advance. We imagine these services to be very casual (feel free to wear your pjs). Using this format for worship will give our music staff and camera/worship production team a well-earned break.

# Mission Giving

## Thanksgiving Food Drive

The Thanksgiving Food drive was a great success this year. Thanks to the generosity of many folks from CPC and the surrounding churches involved in the Catonsville Can Ministry, we were able to give a complete Thanksgiving meal to over 200 families. Even though the pandemic forced us outside, we were able to construct a tent at Grace AME for the curbside pick up, coordinate a food donation drive in the "Fill this Truck event," and purchase turkeys and food items with all the generous donations. Thank you to everyone that made this possible. Thanks be to God!

## Seafarers International Thank You Note

Dear Catonsville Presbyterian c/o Lee and Sid, Please accept my heartfelt thanks for 52 beautiful Christmas at Sea packages. 2020 has strained everyone's resources and energy, and rest assured that I don't take this generous donation for granted. 2020 has also been a very tough year for seafarers, as I'm sure Lee has shared with you all, and this will surely brighten a dark time for them. I also appreciate the photos!

Thanks and blessings,  
The Rev. Mary Davisson, Director  
Baltimore International Seafarers' Center

## West Side Men's Shelter

There is a collection bin on the front porch of the church house for West Side Men's Shelter items including men's hats, socks, long underwear—new items only. Men's coats (new and used, clean and in good condition) will also be received—sizes L and XL especially needed. All items will be collected through January 31, 2021.



*Thanksgiving Food Drive photographs featured above and the Christmas at Sea photographs are shown below.*



# 2021 Pledge Update

## Total Pledged

\$355,364 (\$373,000 pledged for 2020)

## Total Pledges Received

95 (109 pledged in 2020)

## Of the Pledges Received

14 are from new pledges

36 are repeat pledges that raised their pledge

39 are repeat pledges that maintained their 2020 pledge

## 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.

## Doing God's Work

Income as of December 12	\$ 641,614
Expense as of December 12	\$ -639,915
Total:	\$ - 1,699

## 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

1400 Frederick Road  
Catonsville, MD 21228

(P) 410-747-6180, (F) 410-747-7263

[www.catonsvillepres.org](http://www.catonsvillepres.org)

[Facebook.com/catonsvillepresb](https://www.facebook.com/catonsvillepresb)

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

Church Office Hours:

Tuesday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

[office@catonsvillepres.org](mailto:office@catonsvillepres.org)



### Baptism Announcement

Olena Renn was baptized on November 21, 2021, daughter of Jess and Brewster Renn (photographed above).

### With Sympathy

Avonne "Pat" Schwartz and her son, Tim, died on Friday, November 27, 2020. We received news that Lysle Gray died on November 4, 2020. His wife, Shirley, resides at Charlestown Retirement Community. Please keep their families, friends, and neighbors in your prayers.

### New Members

Please welcome new members that joined on Sunday, December 13, 2020, via Zoom (photograph below). The group includes: Louann Morsberger Tracy, Marcus Tracy and Stephanie Hargest, Jeff and Michelle Lipinski.

