

December 2021

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.

Organist

Christopher Keenan, 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 Office Manager

Ashley Graham



CLOSE to
HOME

By Kenneth Kovacs

When something hits close to home, it affects us deeply. During the Advent and Christmas season, we journey through scriptures and rituals that are tender, heavy with emotion, and vulnerable. We carry the memories and truths of this season close to our hearts. Our theme for this season—Close to Home—acknowledges the “already but not yet” tension of our faith: Emmanuel is with us, and yet, God’s promised day—our everlasting home—is not fully realized. It names our deep longing for God to come close to us. The images, artwork,

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Close to Home

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and liturgies we will be using throughout the season were designed and written by the people at Sanctified Art, a team of Presbyterian ministers and elders passionate about new ways to engage hearts and minds in worship.

The Advent and Christmas scriptures are rich with home metaphors and imagery. John the Baptist prophesies about the One who is to come but reminds us that we are still wandering far from God's promised day; his message hits close to home, especially for those experiencing inequity and oppression. After receiving the angel's news, Mary retreats to Elizabeth's home, seeking refuge and safety. Christ is born amid a journey home, in a crowded dwelling amidst livestock and shepherds alike. The Magi travel far from home to pay homage to Christ, and, having been warned in a dream, they avoid Herod by traveling home another way. In these scriptures, home is both physical and metaphorical, something we both seek and are called to build. Ultimately, God is our home and resting place. God draws near and makes a home on earth—sacred ground is all around us.

Close to Home also names the pain many of us will carry into this season. The holidays can poke at our grief. Many will be missing loved ones lost to sickness and tragedy. The traumas of the pandemic are with us. Many in our communities, our nation, and around the world have lost homes—due to natural disasters, economic hardship, political turmoil and war, and unjust policies. Refugees are searching for new homes. Many do not feel safe in their own homes due to poor living conditions or harmful family dynamics. Many feel alone and isolated at home. Churches are discerning transitions with their physical buildings; many of our spiritual homes are changing.

This Advent, may we be comforted by the One who dwells intimately with us. May we expand safety and sanctuary for everyone wandering far from home. May we come home, wherever home is found—to live fully with joy, hope, and courage.

ADVENT LECTIONARY:

Listen for the Word of God

By Kenneth Kovacs

Throughout the season of Advent, we will offer opportunities to study the weekly lectionary reading that we will hear in worship each week. On Advent I/November 28 we begin a new liturgical year, Year C (of a three-year cycle), with special attention given to the Gospel According to Luke. Here are the lectionary readings for you to reflect upon in advance. We will explore how these rich and provocative texts connect to our theme, "close to home." [Read the Devotional.](#)

Advent I (Nov. 28): Jeremiah 33:14-15; I Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

Advent II (Dec. 5): Malachi 3:1-4; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

Advent III (Dec. 12): Zephaniah 3:14-20; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

Advent IV (Dec. 19): Micah 5:2-5a; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

JOIN US

Thursday evenings, December 2 and 9 (via Zoom)

Sunday mornings, December 5 and 19 (in person) at 9 a.m.

SHIRLEY WINTERS to Retire

By Kenneth Kovacs

After twenty-nine years at CPC, Shirley Winters will be retiring at the end of December 2021. Over this time as Office Administrator, Shirley has been an integral member of the staff, supporting the ministry of CPC and keeping track of a myriad of files and records and people. She has been tirelessly committed to her work and rarely took time off (even when encouraged to do so). Shirley has been a kind and welcoming presence in the office. And, just consider all those bulletins she prepared, with attention given to the particular “look” of each service, the readability of the text (consideration of font size, spacing), the clarity of expression. And there are many things that Shirley has done that have been invisible to most. Here’s one example: all the time and care she gives to individuals that turn to CPC for assistance (financial or otherwise). Sometimes they arrive at the door of the Church House, or they call and share their story. And then Shirley determines the best way to provide help, whether directing them to CEA or suggesting the use of the Deacons Outside Assistance Fund. Shirley has witnessed a lot of change in the church during her time of service. She helped us weather our storms and celebrate our achievements.

Shirley’s last day with us will be December 31. She doesn’t want a party or special recognition or any fuss from us. And so we will respect her wishes. If you want to express well wishes, please send a card or note rather than calling or dropping by the office. Thank you, Shirley, for all that you have given to the life and witness of CPC. We wish you all the best.

CHURCH YOUTH RAISE FUNDS



CPC children and youth raised \$500 for Church World Service ministries in our (very) local CROP Hunger walks.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Activities and Worship Services

Advent I (November 28): Worship at 10:30 a.m. and MCKIM Gift Giving Starts

Advent II (December 5): Lectionary Reading at 9 a.m. and Worship at 10:30 a.m.

Advent III (December 12): Worship at 10:30 a.m., Church School, Catonsville Concert at 3 p.m., and Cocoa and Carols at 7 p.m.

Advent IV (December 19): Lectionary Reading at 9 a.m. and Worship at 10:30 a.m.

COCOA AND CAROLS

Sunday, December 12 at 7 p.m.

Join us for an outdoor holiday event. Come and sing your favorite carols, enjoy some hot chocolate, and listen to the music of the season provided by a brass quartet. Our Advent Evening Vespers were very popular last year and so we thought we would offer something similar. We also heard how much folks enjoyed gathering together outdoors and welcoming neighbors to join in. No reservations will be required. Come early at 6:45 p.m. for a craft in fellowship hall.

BLUE CHRISTMAS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21, AT 7 P.M.

For those who have experienced loss, the holidays can be a particularly painful time, stirring up grief in acute ways. As a result, churches around the world have adopted the practice of having a "Blue Christmas" or a "Longest Night" service during the Advent season. In the Northern hemisphere, this service is often observed on December 21st, the Winter Solstice, which is the longest night of the year.

Our Blue Christmas service is designed to provide space for prayer, reflection, and remembrance amidst the holiday hustle and bustle. In this pandemic season of life, grief and loss are magnified and nearly

universal, making a service like this needed now more than ever. Join us in the sanctuary (or online) on Tuesday, December 21, at 7 p.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24 AT 4 P.M. AND 8 P.M.

Join us at 4 p.m. for this always-wonderful interactive and intergenerational worship service. Then in the evening at 8 p.m., come for a joyous service of wonder and light. "All is calm, all is bright." Join us in the sanctuary (or online) on Friday, December 24.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

You are invited to contribute to the Flower Fund, which provides poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary during Advent and Christmas. You may donate as you desire and designate your contribution in honor of or in memory of loved ones. All poinsettias will be delivered to those who are homebound. Send a check payable to CPC with "Flower Fund" on the memo line and be sure to indicate the name(s) of those being remembered or honored. You can email this information to office@catonsvillepres.org. You may also contribute online, be sure to leave the name of the memorial/honoree in the memo section. Gifts will be received through mid-December.

Catonsville Concerts at 3

The award-winning Heart of Maryland Barbershop Chorus sings four-part harmony in the barbershop style as both a chorus and in quartets. They've been entertaining audiences for over fifty years with a wide variety of music for audiences of all ages. Join us on Sunday, December 12, 2021 at 3 p.m. at Catonsville Presbyterian Church. Learn more at <https://catonsvilleconcerts.org>.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Christian Education News

By Dorothy Boulton

MCKIM GIFTS

November 28, December 5 and 12

We are collecting new, unwrapped gifts for the children of McKim Community Center in East Baltimore on Sundays, November 28, December 5 and 12. Please bring a gift appropriate for a child (anywhere between the ages of 7 and 14-years-old) to the sanctuary. Board games, craft kits, and sports equipment are excellent choices. Thank you for helping make a child's Christmas bright.

CHURCH SCHOOL

Sunday, December 12 at 10:45 a.m.

Multi Age Church School for ages K – 5th grade meets for Christmas-themed Bible stories and activities. Children will leave the sanctuary following the children's message and gather in fellowship hall (masked/distanced) approx. 10:45 – 11:30 a.m.

YOUTH GATHERING

Sunday, December 12 at 4:30 p.m.

Middle and high school youth will be in charge of refreshments that afternoon as we help host our Cocoa and Carols all-church event. Come and spread Christmas cheer! Meet at 4:30 p.m.

COCOA AND CAROLS

Sunday, December 12 at 7 p.m.

Everyone is invited—all ages, friends, the Catonsville community—everyone is invited to an afternoon of singing and fellowship on Sunday, December 12. We'll provide the cocoa and the songbooks. Get your voices ready for “Deck the Halls” “O Come, All Ye Faithful” and maybe even “Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer.” No RSVP required—just a festive holiday spirit. All ages are welcome to come early, by 6:45 p.m., to assemble an ornament in fellowship hall.

CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY SERVICE

Friday, December 24 at 4 p.m.

Plenty of opportunities to volunteer! First, we'd love to have our youth musicians offer prelude music so if you'd like to share an Advent/Christmas song, we would all be delighted. Second, our worship service is The ABCs of Christmas and we'd be thrilled to have 26 volunteers telling the good news of Jesus' birth. All ages (yes, all ages) are invited to participate – you'll need a clear speaking voice, and the ability to arrive early to rehearse that afternoon at 3:25 p.m. No costumes needed. To volunteer for either of these, please contact Dorothy Boulton at dboulton@catonsvillepres.org by Saturday, December 4 so you can get your short script and make a sign with your alphabet letter. The Family Service will be at 4 p.m. and the Candlelight Service will be at 8 p.m.

DEACONS CORNER

By Dorothy Boulton

Like to cook? Please help us care for one another through the gift of a meal. Our “Helping Hands” ministry offers an opportunity to provide a meal to a church member/family who would benefit from this kindness. This might be a congregation member who is receiving medical treatment, or recovering from an illness at home. It's a really easy way to volunteer: we use the take them a meal scheduling link and we would send it to you as a email. You can choose whether to sign up or not, and can schedule the food delivery date at your mutual convenience. If you would like to receive these occasional emails, please contact Dorothy Boulton at dboulton@catonsvillepres.org. She will forward your information to the Deacons' helping hands coordinator. Thank you for helping us with a ministry that nourishes, in both body and spirit.

STEPHEN MINISTRY LEADERS

By Charre Symms

After completing the required training, Dorothy Boulton, Reid Spearman, and Charre Symms were commissioned as Stephen Leaders by Tom Enokian and David Hutton during the worship service on October 17. Dorothy's sermon, "Christ Caring For People, Through People", detailed how Stephen Ministry provides a way for dedicated lay members to meet the needs of individuals going through tough times. Stephen Ministers (also called care givers) provide one-on-one, confidential, Christ-centered care to augment the care provided by our pastors, deacons, and other leaders. Stephen Ministry will enhance the growth of CPC as a caring Christian community.

In order to provide that care, we need to identify and train our first class of Stephen Ministers. Who can be a Stephen Minister? Anyone who wants to make a difference for someone going through life's most difficult challenges such as serious illness, grief, end-of-life issues, divorce, financial difficulties, family stress, and major transitions. The key to being an effective Stephen Minister is just being there to walk beside someone who needs support. One of the major tenets of Stephen Ministry is that a Stephen Minister provides the care and God provides the cure. Relying on God to provide the cure frees the Stephen Minister to provide support through distinctively Christian caring, active listening, dealing with difficult emotions, confidentiality, and maintaining boundaries. Before serving, Stephen Ministers will be effectively trained in these and other areas of care-giving.

The process for becoming a Stephen Minister starts with submitting an application and having an interview with Stephen Leaders. This allows the applicant to thoroughly understand the requirements and expectations of the program before fully committing to going through the training. We will be accepting applications through the end of January 2022 after which we will conduct the interviews and plan to begin training in March 2022. If you feel called to serve as a Stephen Minister care-giver, please reach out to one of the leaders for more information and/or an application. Please pray for wisdom and direction as we commence this exciting new service to our congregation and community.

STEPHEN MINISTRY LEADERS

Dorothy Boulton at dboulton@cantonsvillepres.org

Reid Spearman at speareid@gmail.com

Charre Symms at csymms@sbcglobal.net

STEWARDS OF GRACE

Each of us has gifts. We are charged to serve one another with the gifts that we have. In this way, we become stewards of all that God has given us. Making a financial pledge to the ministry of CPC is one way to be a steward of those gifts. Please register your 2022 commitment by filling out a pledge card. You may place it in the offering plate any Sunday or mail it to the church office, attention of the Pledge Secretary. An online pledge form is also available at: <https://catonsvillepres.org/stewardship-2021-pledge/>. Join us in making a financial pledge to invest in our shared congregational life and ministries. [Read Brad Peercy's stewardship letter.](#)

TRICK OR TREAT TRAIL 2021

For the second year, CPC hosted a sweet treat for our young friends and their parents and guardians. As Halloween fell on Sunday this year, it made for a great fit. Shortly after service, costume-clad youngsters (in age and in heart) started to gather in the newly completed pavilion. A small but mighty contingent of volunteers lined up along the trail in the woodlands, holding their bags of goodies. For about 45 minutes, there was a super cute and adorably spooky parade of little ones joyously gallivanting through the crunchy leaves in the woodlands, stopping at each station to get their candies. Thanks to all the families and friends who came out and helped make the event such a sweet success.

SESSION MEETING Highlights from November

By David Hutton

Your Session continues to meet monthly and is using Zoom to meet online in view of the coronavirus pandemic restrictions. Following are highlights from the Session meeting on November 3, 2021.

- The Session voted to go on record as supporting the Maryland Environmental Human Rights Amendment, which is a proposed amendment to the Maryland constitution. The amendment asserts that every person, as a matter of human dignity, has the fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful and stable environment. You can learn more about this proposed amendment by going to <https://mdehr.org/amendment/>.
- The Finance Committee reported that a budget deficit remains, and it is expected that members will bring their pledges and contributions up to date before the end of the year. The Balance Sheet is being revised to recognize the Pavilion as an asset, and the Columbarium will be added as soon as the construction expenses are finalized.
- An email was received from the daughter of former Assistant Pastor Ronald L. Creager advising of his recent death. He served at CPC from April, 1969 through January, 1975. The Clerk replied with condolences on behalf of the Session and the congregation.
- Session approved recommended changes to the Child Care Center Staff Handbook affecting policies on the vaccination status of staff members. The main impact is that unvaccinated staff members will now be required to present a negative COVID-19 test to return to the Center after an exposure. The changes follow MSDE and CDC guidelines.
- Following the recommendation of the Opening Up Task Force, Session approved the following policy changes on church building use:
 - o The ribbons in the pews will be removed effective November 14, 2021. Congregation members will be responsible for their own social distancing. Masks will still be required in the building.
 - o The capacity of Fellowship Hall will be opened to 40 persons, and the France Room and Library to 10 persons each. No food or beverages will be allowed.
 - o The Scout groups will be allowed to return to their regular rooms for meetings.
 - o The Task Force will continue to monitor state and local COVID statistics and adjust their recommendations accordingly.

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 easier than ever 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!

CHILD Care Council

By Chris Coker

The Child Care Council is looking for a few new council members to work with the professional administrators at CPC's award winning Child Care Center. Personally, working on the Child Care Council has been an incredibly rewarding experience as it has allowed me to build relationships within the Church while assisting with one of our most visible Community programs. Please think about serving the Church and the community at large, by joining the Child Care Council. Contact Chris Coker at coker357@hotmail.com to learn more on becoming involved. Thank You!

SCOUT Tree Sale

By Glenda Johnson

It's that time of year already...The Christmas trees arrive early the morning of November 27. The sale begins that same day by noon and continues until all the trees are sold by mid-December. This is the major fundraiser for the Troop and your support is appreciated. The trees are freshly cut and delivered from Western Maryland, as in previous years. Sale hours are Monday-Thursday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Fridays from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sundays from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Catonsville Presbyterian Church

Our Financial Resources

Doing God's Work

Income as of
November 20, 2021 \$ 644,917

Expense as of
November 20, 2021 \$ -664,109

Total \$ -19,192

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

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

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

www.instagram.com/catonsvillepres

Church Office Hours:

Tuesday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.

office@catonsvillepres.org

Christmas at Sea

By Lee Van Koten

We will again be collecting gifts for seafarers, but because of the pandemic, several things have changed. This effort will be even more important this year than usual. Christmas is always a lonely time of year for seafarers who are far from home and loved ones, but because of concerns about a covid outbreak onboard ship when they may be far away from medical treatment, most of them have not been permitted to have shore leave for many months. It is therefore even more important than usual to let them know that their efforts to keep the world economy functioning are appreciated. In order to eliminate the need for church members who may be concerned about exposure to covid to shop for individual items, the Mission Committee is purchasing items for the gift bags in bulk, and is accepting cash donations to defray the cost. A donation of \$10 will purchase items for one gift bag. Please make contributions to CPC and label them "Christmas At Sea." Donations will be accepted through the end of November. We will be assembling the gift bags on Saturday, December 4, at 11 a.m. Members of the congregation are welcome to help in the assembly of the bags. Our goal is 50 gift bags.

Life in Community

We are sad to share that Al Davies died on Tuesday, November 2, 2021. He was 91. A retired PCUSA pastor, Al, and his wife Wylene started attending CPC soon after arriving in Charlestown in 2011.

We share the sad loss that Libby Wolf died on Saturday, November 6, 2021. She was 96. Fred and Libby transferred their membership from Towson Presbyterian Church to CPC in May 1989. Libby deeply loved the people of this church.

Once again we share sad news that long-time church member, William "Bill" Quigley, died at Howard County Hospital on Monday, November 8, 2021 at the age of 92. Bill joined the church, along with his wife, Jane, in 1956 and was a faithful member of CPC.

