

Dear Friends,

It's a new year! The tradition is to make a New Year's Resolution--to do something new, something that is good for you (lose weight, eat less, exercise more, reach a goal, serve others, pray daily). Some resolutions are successful and some are not.

The prophet Isaiah offers some sage advice in how to honor New Year's Resolutions:

Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing: now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43:18-19).

The first part is: *Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. This is harder than it seems. How much energy do we spend on the former things? Some like to remember the "good old days;" with nostalgia we long to turn back time to when everything was alright. We tend to remember things as better than they actually were. Others like to remember the past in a negative light. We replay the tapes with regret--wishing we had not said what we said or done what we did. As we remember, we allow ourselves to feel anger about how we were treated and our hurts that still hurt. Whether with romance or regret, we often find ourselves looking back.*

In order to honor our Resolutions this New Year, we have to begin with step one: *Do not remember the former things, or the things of old. Isaiah calls the people then and now: Let it go! Learn lessons it has to teach us, yes, but let go of the hold the past has on you. Let God make a new way.*

The second part of this wisdom in how to honor New Year's Resolutions is believing in God's promise: *I am about to do a new thing. In Christmas, with the birth of Jesus, God did something brand new. In a world of darkness, Jesus brought light. In a world of despair, Jesus brought hope. In a world of conflict, Jesus brought peace. In a world of sin, Jesus brought salvation and new life. Into our world, God sent love, enough to go around to all.*

Christmas is not over on December 25. The Christmas season continues--all through the New Year. As Isaiah promised: In places of wilderness in our world, God will make a way. In places of desert in our lives, God will provide rivers of living water. With the birth of Christ, God makes a promise--to be with us always. And God intends to keep this Resolution this New Year. How about you?

In the words of Ebenezer Scrooge from the classic *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens:

"I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year."

How do we honor Christmas and try to keep it all year? First, by making a New Year's Resolution not to remember the things of old that keep us prisoner to the past. Jesus forgives us; we need to forgive ourselves. And second, by opening our eyes and minds and expecting God to do new things. For truly, nothing is impossible with God.

New Year Blessings,



Donna

Compelled to Serve...

Posted by [Brooklyn Lindsey](#) (an excerpt from) her Blog at [TheParentCue.org](#)

We have great kids. They are so special. They are kind and generous. They are even kind and generous to each other (sometimes). But sometimes they aren't. I am also a great parent. Everyone knows how to read, and math facts are memorized. We eat meals and sleep well. But sometimes, I'm not a great parent. Sometimes dirty socks in every room in my house can set me into a psycho parent orbit. And so can moments when my kids don't seem to care about anyone else but themselves.

I asked my kids if they could help me deliver crisis kits to people in need after hurricane Irma. They whined and complained. Neither would go. It had been a long day of 2nd and 5th grade, and they were soooooo tired and just needed a break. Seriously people?

I didn't feeling like forcing compassion. Maybe that's the least compassionate thing I could have done? But I was frustrated. I was going to be setting a great example and they were going to be missing it. Can you see the stuck?

They were stuck (not being able to see how helping others is important). And I was stuck (not being able to serve out of a pure heart because I had a goal to help them see what serving looks like). So I went. Alone. And I wondered if I should have made it mandatory for my kids.

Maybe in my hopes that my kids would "see me" I was missing the point. And dragging my kids along for the ride might have them missing the point. Maybe stuck isn't such an awful place when it helps you see your goals more clearly? I realized I was starting with answers instead of starting with better questions.

When I returned from delivering kits to our neighbors, I asked my kids to tell me how they would like to serve others sometime. This simple question was like the roadside hero responding to our metaphorical mini van stuck in a muddy ditch and giving us a little push out. The question got the tires spinning and gave us momentum to get over our impasse and into a place where we could explore.

"I want to save every frog." "I want to call my friend because I miss her."

"I want to see if anyone is thirsty, because being thirsty is hard."

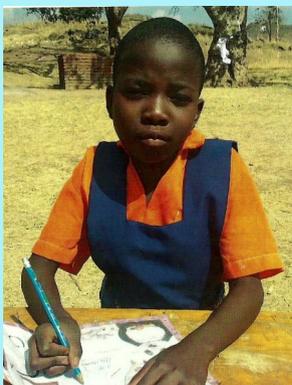
That's how serving is going to happen in my family. It's not going to be organic, motivating, or personal, when I'm telling everyone where they should serve and how they should do it.

To encourage kids to serve authentically from their own sense of compassion, parents should pose great questions instead of imposing all the answers. Instead of telling my kids when or how they will serve, I want to ask them how they see themselves serving. Instead of thinking about the hurdles, start asking about the possibilities—by listening and thinking about how to lean into what God is stirring up in your hearts as a family.

This is my confession and my call to you, my friends: that we'd work to uncover individual passions and strengths, and in turn grow more deeply compassionate and able to serve together as families.

Here's your cue: Start with the next family meal and ask yourselves what situation is in need of a super-hero strength miracle? It could be in your lives, in your community, on your street, in your world. Start writing down all of the ways you might be able to respond, no matter how absurd they sound. Then take the next step together to listen to, receive from, be there for those who Jesus has given you a collective burden.

So if you're feeling stuck in this same place, take courage. You can ask a question today that will help you serve from your hearts, serve from your souls, and give you the courage to serve truthfully as a family. That's when the work you and your kids will do won't be of you, but of the One who made you.



Opportunities for Families to Serve Together...

Sunday, Jan 14 - @ 11:30 am. We'll take the \$ we collected in our 2-Cents-a-Meal wagon and go shop at the grocery store for Food Bank supplies.

Sunday, Jan 21 - Encouragement for Ethel. Our Sunday School sponsors a World Vision child named Ethel. We are falling behind on our support and will be collecting coins and writing letters to her during Fellowship Hour.

Youth

Giant Youth Group

Sunday, January 21st at 6:00 pm

Youth from Presbyterian Churches all over Pittsburgh are getting together for one really BIG Youth Group night!



Games, contests w/ prizes, a worship band and this guy



will do a Youth Group version of a "sermon". He's pretty awesome. I know him. His name is Mark-O.

\$5 per person

SATURDAY
January 6th
Homeless Ministry
 In Allegheny Commons Park
Meet at Church at 9:30 am.
 Bring Socks or Gloves & a pre-packaged individual snack to hand out. Back by 12.

JANUARY

- 6 Homeless in the Park. Meet at Church @ 9:30 am. Bring Socks or Gloves & a pre-packaged individual snack to hand out. Back by 12:00
- 7 @ 5:00-7:00 pm. Watch "The Shack" movie in Fellowship Hall.
- 14 @ 5-7:00 pm. Youth Group. Dinner, devotions & downtime.
- 21 @6:00 pm. Big Pittsburgh Youth Group \$5 each. (see info above)
- 28 @ 5-7:00 pm. Youth Group. Dinner, devotions & downtime.

Winter Retreat

Sun-Mon February 18-19.



10 people sign up, we'll go on a winter retreat to cabins at the Laurel Highlands. Great outdoor spaces, sledding, campfires, game room, giant Labyrinth, Mini-golf in the snow? Why not?!
\$65 per person

FEBRUARY

- 12 @ 5:30-7:30 pm. Youth serve at Men's Shelter. Meet at church.
- 18-19 Youth Retreat !!

See info here

Sign Up for Text reminders at **Remind.com @32k69d**

SAVE THE DATES

FEBRUARY 9-10	Marriage Enrichment Workshop
FEBRUARY 11	Annual Congregational Meeting (Following Worship)
FEBRUARY 14	Ash Wednesday Lenten Supper (6:00 PM) & Worship (7:00 PM)
FEBRUARY 21 - MARCH 21	Wednesday Night Lenten Supper Program
FEBRUARY 18-19	Youth Winter Retreat
MARCH 10	Little Dresses for Africa (9:00 AM—2:00 PM)
APRIL 20-22	Women's Retreat



PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Prayer and Bible Study Group meets 10:00 to 11:30 AM Wednesday mornings in the Conference Room. All are welcome. The Scripture passages for the coming month are:

January 3 Isaiah 60:1-6 and Matthew 2:1-12 **January 10** Genesis 1:1-5; Mark 1:4-11
January 17 Jonah 3:1-5; Mark 1:14-20 **January 24** Psalm 111; Mark 1:21-28
January 31 Isaiah 40:21-31; Mark 1:29-39



SANCTUARY FLOWERS

Flowers may be donated to the Glory of God, and/or in memory or in honor of a special person or people in your life. These arrangements are \$40 a vase. Call the office at 412-761-1233 or email Tracey at office@cpcba.org today to reserve a date.



BOOK CLUB

The Book Club's next meeting will be on **February 6, 2018.**

Everyone is invited to participate. We meet at **7:30 PM**, in the **Conference Room** on the first Tuesday of each month from September through May. The **February** book is **The Color of Water** by James McBride and will be lead by Sue Turk. If you would like the book list for the year or have any questions please contact Merle Culley at merleculley@zoominternet.net

NewsLetter
DEADLINE

for FEBRUARY Revelations is JANUARY 15

If article submitted by e-mail, please indicate
FEBRUARY REVELATIONS in topic line.

GENEROSITY CAMPAIGN & GIVING REMINDER

There is still time to turn in your 2018 Generosity Pledge Cards. So far we have received 66 pledges totaling \$208,102. Last year we received 81 pledges totaling \$237,862

You can still drop your pledge cards in the offering plate on Sundays or mail them to the church office.

You still have time to complete your 2017 pledge, **but all contributions for 2017 federal tax credit must be postmarked by December 31, 2017.**

THE SHACK

In January, we will offer a six-week study based on the book and major motion picture *The Shack*. Using engaging scenes from the film, paired with relevant Scripture, this DVD-based study is an invitation to experience the ultimate truth about love, loss, and forgiveness. We will show the full-length film in the Conference Room on Wednesday, **January 3** from **10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**. Then for the next 5 Wednesdays (10:00-12:00), we will discuss questions raised by the film:

Where is God when I need him most?

How do we forgive people who have hurt us?

We will also show the film on Sunday, **January 7** from **5:00 - 7:00 PM** in Fellowship Hall.

Come, bring your questions, and with the help of others, find answers and healing you are looking for.

LIVING WITH LOSS

Have you experienced a loss in your life? A loss of a loved one, a friend, a pet, or a job? Loss is a way of life, but it's not easy; we need help learning to live with it. And so we are starting a support group called "Living with Loss." We will meet on the **2nd Tuesday of each month, from 7-8:00 PM** at the Community Presbyterian Church of Ben Avon. Leaders are trained in grief counseling. Child care is available if needed. **Our next meeting is Tuesday, January 9.** Questions? Email Donna Giver-Johnston at pastordonna@cpcab.org or Susan Fink at SusanMFink@gmail.com.

Take the Challenge!

Take that special someone to the sixth annual Northside Common Ministries Food Pantry Brunch Challenge. It's the perfect holiday gift! Join us on stage at the New Hazlett Theater, 6 Allegheny Square E, Pittsburgh, PA 15212 (Northside) on **Saturday, January 20, at 11 a.m.** for a delicious and entertaining brunch. Ten chefs are challenged to create an appetizer from an item always in stock in a local community food pantry. This year's challenge item is canned beans. Come see what these chefs from local restaurants and catering companies can come up with while sampling items from their regular menus. Enjoy the music of a local Mexican band and decor as we celebrate our brothers and sisters from Mexico at this year's brunch.

Tickets are on sale for just \$25. Send an email to jay.poliziani@ncmin.org to secure your tickets.



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Do you know how many times people refer to those of you who came here last year as angels? No matter who knows you that might argue they know better, the families who received your gifts of hope know something different! Angels bring a message from God. You brought a message of love.

The year 2017 was a year of recovery from the floods of 2016. And that's not all. The disaster of poverty continues to plague families in West Virginia, as does illness, aging, and handicap. Because of your generosity—your hands, your feet, your funding, your donations—more families here are warm, safe and dry.

In 2017 WVMAW hosted 82 teams representing 1,147 individual volunteers from PA, MD, VA, NC, SC, GA, IN, OH, KY, NY, NJ, MI, IL, ME, NH, and MA. These angels helped to build or rebuild destroyed or severely damaged homes, serving over 200 people. Many replaced flooring, walls, porches, built ramps, put on roofing, siding, cleaned out and underpinned, insulated, sheet rocked, painted, trimmed, plumbed, wired—whatever was needed. Many brought years of experience. Others learned new things. So many arrived saying they had no skills, yet found they could do more than they realized. And best of all, so many of you got to know the families you served and found out that was as much mission as driving nails! From the little things to the big things, every one made a difference in the lives of each family you touched. We call that “Jesus Math” around here—Jesus takes a little and makes it much.

You may not think of yourself as a “celestial being” that arrived in WV with a hammer, but you indeed brought a heavenly message: God is love. May God bless you during this season of hope, peace, joy and love as we celebrate that Love came down to us when Jesus was born. Thank you for sharing that Love with all of us here in West Virginia. Merry Christmas, and may the New Year bring you peace.

In Christ's love,

Joan Stewart
Executive Director

The West Virginia Ministry of Advocacy and Workcamps (WVMAW) is a Christian ministry supported in part by the Presbyterian Church (USA) that offers the opportunity for discipleship by partnering with those in need whose lives have been devastated by natural disasters or by the disaster of poverty in areas of West Virginia.

SAVE THE DATE

LITTLE DRESSES FOR AFRICA

Bring your sewing machines, thread and smiles.
Material, bias tape, elastic and lunch will be provided.

The date is **March 10** from **9:00 AM to 2:00 PM** in Fellowship Hall.
Please contact Jody Jackson for information and reservations at 412-364-8573.
We look forward to another great day of sewing, fellowship and lots of laughs.
Invite anyone you think may like to join us in this project. God bless.

PARDON OUR MESS

The Building & Grounds Committee, with Sessions approval, has hired Burns & Scalo to remove old shingles, make necessary roof repairs and apply new shingles to the roof above Fellowship Hall. They will also be replacing several adjacent flat roofs. Weather and large size of Fellowship Hall roof will affect how quickly this project will be completed.

CPCBA 2018 WOMEN'S RETREAT

in company with women of Pittsburgh Presbytery

APRIL 20-22, Friday evening through Sunday morning

CRESTFIELD CONFERENCE CENTER

SCOTT LODGE – each room has an en suite bath

THEME: GRACE ALIVE!

LEADER – Rev. Jane Esterline

We have rooms pre-reserved for 22 Ben Avon women:
5 doubles (approx \$115 each), 3 triples (\$107) and 3 singles (\$150)

Open registration begins January 2, 2018. If our Ben Avon rooms are not spoken for by then, they will be made available for other women.

Please complete the form below NOW to express your interest!

Fees to attend will be collected after December 1.

NAME: _____

HOME PHONE: _____

MOBILE PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

I am interested in:

Single _____

Double with roommate: _____

Triple with roommates: _____

Return form to church office or call Jean Henderson – 412-352-8001



At CPCBA, we are:

***Bringing Christ
to our Community...***

***Bringing our Community
to Christ.***

We Invite all to:

Come, just as you are...

Find the joy and inspiration you seek...

Become the person you were created to be.

Revelations

Community Presbyterian Church of Ben Avon
7501 Church Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15202

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Pittsburgh, PA
Permit No. 221

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."
Revelation 22:21



Staff

Ministers.....	The Whole Congregation
Pastor.....	Rev. Dr. Donna Giver-Johnston
Administrative Assistant.....	Tracey Mundorf
Directory of Music.....	Timothy Heavner
Director of Christian Education.....	Melanie Holcomb

Board and Committee Leadership

Clerk of Session.....	Deb Sadowski
Trustees, President	John Buchanan
Treasurer.....	Trudy File
Deacons Co-Moderators	Stephen Fockler/Denny Brown
Wooden Ladder Preschool.....	Teresa Beshai
Financial Secretary.....	Barbara Barcousky
Christian Education	Alison Trexel/Teresa Beshai
Fellowship	Kate Colville/Diana Petruska
Mission & Outreach	Lyn Robertson/Deb Sadowski
Nominating	Amy Reed
Personnel	Ralph Fink/Amy Reed
Property.....	Jeff Houser, Sr./Bob Nadin
Finance.....	John Buchanan
Stewardship.....	Bob Nadin/Diana Petruska
Worship & Music	Susan Abramowich
Communications.....	Deb Sadowski//Steve Mellon
Small Groups.....	Teresa Beshai/Lyn Robertson
Stephen Ministry.....	Lyn Robertson

TOGETHER WE ARE THE CHURCH

Deacon Comfort and Joy Contacts

For Meal Assistance:

Susan Geist (412-427-8339 or email: susangeist@verizon.net)

For Grief Support:

PJ Jones (412-400-4346 or email: pj@rbjonescorp.com)

For Visitation:

Mary Witul (412-734-2772 or email: marywitul@comcast.net) or
Sue Turk (814-323-6399 or email: sturk215@gmail.com)

For Card Ministry:

Lindsey Spatholt (716-998-2535 or
email: lindsey.spatholt@gmail.com)

Please help the Deacons share the concern of our community by letting us know whether you, or a friend or family member, would welcome a visit. Requests can be made to any Deacon.

Prayer Concerns

If you or someone you know is in need of prayer, Please email Sandy Stauffer at esstauff@verizon.net or you can call Tracey in the church office at 412-761-1233.

Church Office Hours are Monday-Friday—9:30 AM-3:30 PM

† Phone: 412-761-1233; 412-766-1800 † Fax: (412) 766-1801 † E-mail: office@cpcba.org † Web site: www.cpcba.org