



December 2016

Pastor

Rev. Carol Ferguson

Session**Class of 2017**Meaghan Mullin
Jim Burdick
Stacey Ross**Class of 2018**Shannon Murphy
Tim Reed**Class of 2019**Stephanie Boyd
Sarah Cottongim
Amy Rigney**Clerk of Session**

Crystal Hardin

Committee Chairs**Stewardship/Finance**

Dan Alexander

Worship

Kim Newton

Christian Education

Erin Murphy

Mission

Heather Alexander

Building and Grounds

Walt Cottongim

Congregational Care

Becky Burdick

Personnel

Meaghan Mullin

Growth and Evangelism

Jim Burdick

Clarion EditorTerry David
terrydavid05@gmail.com**Find us on Facebook!**Crescent Springs
Presbyterian Church**Advent: A Familiar Story with an Unknown Ending**

When I was a child, my family had two Advent calendars, each with little books for each day of December leading up to Christmas. One calendar told the story of the birth of Christ. The other told the story of the Nutcracker.

For me, these two calendars represented the two stories of Christmas: religious and secular. The secular story, the one that ends in candy and presents, the one that sends us all to the Land of Sweets on December 25, is far more popular. It has the benefit of billions of dollars' worth of PR on its behalf. And more than that, it has the benefit of meeting expectations. If what we want on Christmas are presents and candy, most of us can make that happen, even if we have to buy them for ourselves. We can make sure the story ends the way we want it to.

The other story, though—the story of Christ's coming—that ending isn't up to us, because we aren't just waiting to remember Christ's birth two thousand years ago; we're waiting for Christ to *come again*. That is the ending we are waiting for, however hesitant we are about naming it as such. And yet each year, the story doesn't end that way. Each year we sing *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*, and each year Christ doesn't, not in the way we are promised. Each year we remember Christ's promises of hope and peace and joy and love and incarnation, and each year we get four out of the five, and it has to be enough. Each year we find the story is unending. For some, that is unsatisfying. But for others, it is a call to keep the faith. God is not through with God's people yet. It is still up to us to be Christ's body in the world.

During Advent, I will be preaching from Isaiah, whose dreams could rival that of the Nutcracker's Clara. Isaiah dreamed up worlds in which hope, peace, joy, and love held sway; worlds where predator and prey were friends and the desert brought forth gardens, where highways were safe and justice and mercy flowed from those in power. He did not know he was dreaming of the gifts of Christ. He could not have known. But he knew that God's story was not over; that it would not be over until all people see the great light of God's salvation dawning into our world.

I love both stories of Christmas. I love the Nutcracker and the gifts and going home to see family. I love the comfort and predictability of that story. But I have a deeper love, I hope, for the other story, the story of an unpredictable God who came to earth as a child of poverty and who promised to return but would not give us the day or the time.

When I sing for Christ to come again, I do not know exactly what it is I am hoping for. But, like Isaiah, I am committed to dreaming of hope, peace, joy, and love for all people, and committed to working for it, until Christ comes again in glory.

I hope, in this busy season, you too will find time to dream.

Peace,
Carol

New Ways to Communicate

The Session has been discussing new ways to communicate our events to the congregation. Currently they are looking at email blasts for time-sensitive information along with a blog that will feature more detailed information with photos and articles of past events. They are looking to start these new formats next month as we start the new year. Hard copies of email blasts and blogs will be available once a month for and our home-bound members and those who don't use computers.

Thanksgiving and Christmas Mission Baskets

Thank you to everyone who supported our Thanksgiving baskets! With your help CSPC provided food over the holiday break for 15 families at the River Ridge Resource Center and throughout our community. We are continuing to collect food for the Christmas baskets including canned soup, canned stew, canned pasta, crackers, applesauce, tuna, hamburger helper meals and canned fruits. We are also collecting personal care items such as paper towels, deodorant, toothpaste, detergent and toilet tissue. Please leave your items in the labeled totes in the Narthex.

Heather Alexander

Christmas Giving Tree

The Helping Hands Giving Tree is Back! Pick a mitten off the tree in the narthex to help provide a fun Christmas for families from River Ridge Elementary and the community. Gifts are due unwrapped on Sunday, December 11th. Please sign your name to the Giving Tree List on the table in the narthex so we know who is bringing which gift.

Ongoing Mission Projects



The Mission Committee also continues to support the River Ridge Resource Center through our Food for Thought Program. Your donations of individual sized shelf stable milk, pasta meals, 100% juice, applesauce, crackers and cereal are greatly appreciated. Our next Food for Thought pack will be Sunday, December 4, following the worship service. And don't forget to shop at **Remke Market** in Buttermilk Town Center to help support our Food For Thought Program. Bring in your reusable shopping bags, and you will receive a wooden token from the cashier. Deposit the token in the 6th Sense bin by the door, and CSPC will receive 6 cents to help provide weekend meals for local, food-insecure school children.

For many years, CSPC has collected donations for Lifeline Ministries. They have announced that they are closing down their operations. We give thanks for their ministry and are looking for new ministries with which to partner. Until a new program is in place, we will not be collecting gently used clothing.

Flames Youth Group



The Presbyterian Youth Connection presented a retreat focusing on racism at Knox Presbyterian for middle school and high school youth. There were churches from Ohio and Kentucky that participated. We learned some more about racism, privilege and justice. We also had a bowling party last month. The Flames will have a Christmas Party at 3:00 on Sunday, December 18th.

Meaghan Mullin

December Services

There will be two Christmas Eve Services on December 24th – one at 7 p.m. and another at 11 p.m. There will also be a casual Christmas Day service at 9 a.m. Plan on attending one or more of these services for the opportunity to center yourself in Christ's love and be reminded of the reason for the season.

Adult Sunday School

We are starting an Advent series on November 27th. This five-part lesson is called "Pausing on the Road to Bethlehem". Advent is a time of preparation for the birth of our Lord Jesus and this class will provide adults with ample opportunities to pause, reflect, and reset their priorities in order to prepare for the holy days of the upcoming holidays.

Children's Christmas Pageant and Potluck Supper

Practice and preparations are underway for this year's Christmas Pageant and Potluck supper. Nancy Reed and Betty Cottongim are planning the potluck which will be served at 5:30 on Sunday, December 11th. After supper, we will move into the sanctuary for two skits presented by our CSPC youth. One of the skits is entitled "I Didn't Think it Would Happen Like That" and the other is "Twas the Night Before Christmas". This is a great opportunity to invite friends and family to see our church and experience a truly intergenerational evening.

Are you Ready for Advent?

We are here at CSPC! Thanks go to the Burdicks, Thompsons, Reeds, Terry David, Marilyn Reinhardt, and Worship Chair, Kim Newton for decorating our church for the Advent season on November 26th. The Worship Committee has coordinated families to light the Advent candles during the season. If you are looking for a daily devotional for Advent, log onto the website www.d365.org for daily Bible readings, prayers and short lessons.



Congregational Care Committee

The C.C.C. is busy coordinating the Adult Christmas Party to be held at the Orleans Clubhouse in Union, KY, on December 3rd. We are also planning an event for January 15th after church, weather permitting. Watch for a sign-up sheet in the narthex on January 1st.

Have you noticed TWO greeters on Sunday? Martin is our primary greeter as he has done so well for many years. The additional greeter is watching for visitors who are attending our church for the first time. Their job is to help make our visitor's first time to our service a friendly and comfortable experience by answering any questions they may have and make them aware of the locations of the nursery, cry room, and restrooms. We know YOU are watching for visitors, too, and hope you are introducing yourself to them. We all know what it is like to be the stranger in the room and having a designated person to greet visitors and check back with them after the service is something new that the C.C.C. thought would be worthwhile.

Becky Burdick

Bound by Books

Our adult book club discussion group is made up of men and women, church members past and present, and community members. Most months they meet at church at 7 p.m. and are open to new members. There will not be a Bound by Books discussion in December. Watch for an email blast and information on the new blog for the books that will be discussed in 2017.

Check with Nancy Reed for more information.

Happy Travelers

We are consolidating our November and December meeting into one meeting on December 1st. We are currently planning on a trip to English, KY in the spring to listen to the Robinson Family, a Gospel-singing group. The program involves lunch and a sing-a-long. Our next meeting will be Thursday, January 26th at 10:30 a.m. – everyone is welcome to join this fun group!

Betty Eichelberger

Spotlight on Current Members

It was suggested that we feature a current member/family in the Clarion. Ironically, I decided to feature the Alexander family in our first installment. Ironic? Be sure to read through the whole article.....

Editor, Terry David



Dan grew up in nearby Villa Hills, while Heather is from Stone Mountain, Georgia outside Atlanta. They met during college while both were attending Georgia Tech. Heather earned a BS in Industrial and Systems Engineering, while Dan graduated with a Bachelor of Chemical Engineering degree. After working at P&G in packaging engineering for many years in both Jackson, Tennessee and Cincinnati, in 2011, Dan transferred to finance at P&G and went back to school to pursue his MBA at Northern Kentucky University. Dan and Heather have been married for 15 years and have 3 amazing kids, Ryan (8th grade), Braden (6th grade) and Haylee (3rd grade).

In addition to leading the Mission Committee at CSPC, Heather volunteers in the Hyde Park School library, runs the Castle Market behavior incentive program at Mt Washington School, and assists 6th graders struggling with math at Mt Washington. Heather also enjoys running and completed her first marathon in May.

Over the years at CSPC, Heather has chaired the Christian Education Committee and served as both a Deacon and Elder. Dan currently chairs the Finance Committee and serves as Treasurer, and has served several terms as an Elder.

CSPC has brought us many great memories, including VBS, the Christmas Pageant, Flames Youth Group, and serving the community alongside our friends at CSPC. Dan also has numerous memories from his childhood at CSPC, including VBS on the former front lawn, intergenerational Sunday School, and multiple Montreat youth conferences.

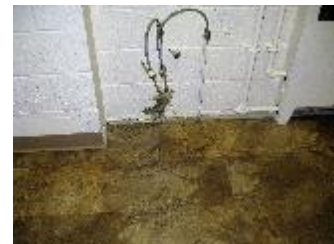
We enjoy watching baseball and football, reading, playing board games, and going on adventures. We are looking forward to our next adventure – moving to Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2017.

Dan Alexander

Note: The Alexander family will be missed greatly!! Dan's placement in Minnesota is currently for two years. We can only hope that they will be headed back this way in 2019!!

Building and Grounds

Work is progressing downstairs in the old fellowship hall! Floors are and walls are finished and the bathroom is ready for the installation of fixtures. Everything looks fresh and clean and Mission has already used this area for packing Food for Thought bags. Once the bathroom is finished and Appliances hooked up in the kitchen, the area will be close to completion and ready for full-time use.



December Events at CSPC

Fridays – 7:00 A.A. Meeting

Saturdays – 8:00 a.m. – Men’s Fellowship

December 1 – Happy Travelers 10:30 a.m.; Worship Committee meeting 5:30 p.m.

December 2 – Tabitha Guild noon – 2:00 p.m.

December 3 – Adult Christmas Party Social Hour 5:30 p.m., dinner 6:30 p.m.

December 4 – Pack Food for Thought bags after church

December 6 – Cornerstone Ministries

December 11 – Return unwrapped Giving Tree gifts 11 a.m.

December 11 - Potluck supper 5:30 p.m., Christmas Pageant 6:30 p.m.

December 12 – Session meeting 7:00 p.m.

December 15 – Building and Grounds meeting 7:00 p.m.

December 16 – Tabitha Guild noon – 2:00 p.m.

December 18 – Flames’ Christmas Party 3:00 p.m.

December 24 – Christmas Eve Service 7 p.m. and 11 p.m.

December 25 – Casual Christmas Day Service 9 a.m.