

BELL TOWER NEWS

College Hill Presbyterian Church – DECEMBER 2022

513.541.5676 | 5742 Hamilton Ave. | Cincinnati, OH 45224 | chpc.org



DO NOT BE AFRAID. I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS

THAT WILL CAUSE GREAT JOY FOR ALL THE PEOPLE. TODAY IN THE TOWN OF DAVID
A SAVIOR HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU; HE IS THE MESSIAH, THE LORD. *LUKE 2:10-11*

Around the world nativity scenes reflect the reality that Jesus has come as Savior of the *whole world*. The designs and materials vary greatly. Some nativities are fine jewelry of precious metals. Others are life-sized and made of straw and clay. Some have been passed down for generations, while others are disposables lasting only a season. Some nativity scenes fit in a match box, others fill soaring cathedrals.

They may be beautiful and serious or zany like the one above. They have this in common—Jesus is the focus.

As you “deck the halls” in your home, put a nativity scene and baby Jesus in a prominent place. Invite guests to share about a nativity they have or a favorite character. With all the woes in today’s world, it is so good to remember *the reason for the season*—Jesus, God incarnate.

CHRISTMAS CHRONICLES:

WHAT GOD IS REALLY DOING
THROUGH CHRISTMAS

The Christmas story tells how God planned and completed our rescue from the evil and destruction of our disobedience to the joy and peace of God’s love. It’s unbelievable but totally true. Let’s celebrate the wondrous gift of Christmas.

November 27

JOIN THE FAMILY – Matthew 1:1-17.

God has made an eternal commitment to include all who follow Jesus as full-fledged family members. God makes us brothers and sisters for eternity with all the riches and rights of the family.

December 4

IT’S NOT GOODBYE, BUT SEE YOU

LATER – Genesis 1:1-3 and 3.

God has made the perfect rescue plan for us to live with God forever. In our arrogant disobedience, we separate ourselves from God, but in sacrificial love God makes a way for us to be reunited with him.

(CONTINUED ON THE BACK COVER)

LEFT: A LION, CAT, GIRAFFE, AND ELEPHANT APPEAR IN THIS SOUTH AFRICAN NATIVITY.



COLLEGE HILL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

'Tis the season to be jolly. However, we know there are many stressors that accompany the holidays. One can be time with family. The holidays may provide opportunities to practice the principles taught during CHPC's November sermon series on "Disagreeing Agreeably."

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR "PEACE ON EARTH" AT HOLIDAY GATHERINGS

BY JEANNE SCHNEIDER, DIRECTOR, LIVING HOPE COUNSELING SERVICES

As I have counseled over the years, it is evident that there is no perfect family. Shocking, right? However, there are ways to spend time with loved ones and experience joy.

It starts within each of us. Psalm 139:23-24 says: *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test my thoughts. Point out anything you find in me that makes you sad, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.* (LIVING BIBLE)

As we begin with ourselves, ask God to reveal those places within that "sadden" him. It is amazing when we ask the Lord, he is faithful in shining light into those places of darkness. He may show you places of unforgiveness or a wound in need of healing. This is not to imply that family holiday gatherings will be "rainbows and unicorns" but you will be able to interact with more internal peace.

So often conflict occurs when people's brains are flooded – the fight, flight, or freeze response. I like to use the metaphor that the part of the brain that is designed to detect danger is like a smoke detector and is often scanning for

smoke. Although, in family situations, the danger is not a saber-toothed tiger, but Aunt Betty who just might be one in disguise after she has had a few drinks. She may know just where to attack. So how do you manage your responses in these situations?

If you are able to stay grounded,



the smoke alarm may alert you but you will be able to rationally determine how best to respond. First, try to breathe in a cadence to counteract the flooded response. Simply breathe in to a count of 4, hold your breath for 7, and slowly exhale on a count of 8. This keeps your executive functioning on-line. This allows you to have healthy responses and determine calmly when productive conversation is not

possible. So one might say, "Aunt Betty, I feel sad that you are poking fun at a painful part in my past" or "Aunt Betty, I know you feel strongly about such and such politician. Can you tell me more about what you like about him/her?" Seek to understand rather than to be understood.

There are some families that are toxic to be around. If that is your situation, it is loving to not participate. Acknowledge the loss and grief in those situations. It's painful! Give yourself space to grieve those losses. Invite Jesus into those places seeking his comfort. Share with friends the grief experience. Determine ways to connect with others that bring joy and peace.

Also, recognize times that you need professional support. Living Hope Counseling provides individual, couple and family counseling. For more information, call 513-371-5135 or www.livinghopecs.com.

If you would like to support the ministry of Living Hope, donations are tax-deductible.

They make counseling services affordable and train the next generation of counseling professionals. Contributions can be made to Living Hope Counseling Services and mailed to: 5742 Hamilton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45224. Donations of tissues and bottled water are also appreciated and can be left at the church or dropped off at the counseling center.



EVIDENCE OF THE INCARNATION: TRANSFORMED LIVES



MARYBELLE CHAPMAN — African Christians know how to pray. When Chappie and I were missionaries in Sierra Leone, I noticed, one evening at the dinner table, that Chappie had a black speck on the white of one eye. I tried to get it out with a napkin to no avail. We took a trip to the capital city to check with an eye specialist. His response was negative: “Come back in a month. If it isn’t any better, you’ll have to go to the states for surgery. I’m warning you, they’ll probably remove your eye.”

Without our knowledge, some women at the church had a prayer meeting. They took a piece of paper, all held it and prayed for Chappie’s eye to be cured. Then they put the paper in an envelope and mailed it to Chappie. On the back of the envelope it read, “Don’t anyone open this but Mr. Chapman.” When Chappie opened the envelope, he unfolded the paper and there was nothing written on it. We both wondered, “What’s that all about?” In a few days the black speck was gone. Chappie never had any trouble with that eye again.

When the women told us their story, we all praised God. My secret question to myself was, “Why are we surprised when God answers prayer?”

Ever wonder about Marybelle’s name? She was born on Dec. 24th as bells rang for another birth. This is a big birthday year for her. Send a card to 1776 Larch # 307 - Belwood, Cincinnati, OH 45224.

JACKY KALUBI — I chaperoned a three-week school trip to China three months after my dear husband Alex passed away. On the third day in Beijing, the group visited Tiantan Park near the Temple of Heaven. It is a bustling park. In this park, you can walk backward, do handstands, dance, and sing. People can do their



own thing without disturbing others or drawing attention to themselves. I wished to find a moment of solitude to breathe, to adjust my mind and aching heart, and to figure out who I was without Alex. I had this image of Alex freed from pain, frolicking in heaven, in Paradise. I always picture Paradise like the images drawn in Bible storybooks. During my free time, I walked among the tight rows of trees that date back 800 years. The trees and the garden were beautiful, peaceful, green, and serene. I was alone in this busy park in one corner of Paradise, like in the books. I fell to my knees, and I cried to the Lord. I heard his voice tell me: “Get up. Don’t cry.”

Despite linguistic barriers, a complete stranger who saw my distress



invited me to participate in a line dance and move my body. My outlook on life changed that day.

I have been back to China twice since that day, but never found that spot in that park again. The experience seems surreal. It took me 14 more years to fully understand God’s message and to let go of my pain. This happened during the 2022 REMARKABLE sermon series: “Remarkable Power” preached by Pastor Drew Smith (Sept. 11) and “Remarkable Peace” preached by Samuel Mock on Sept. 25.

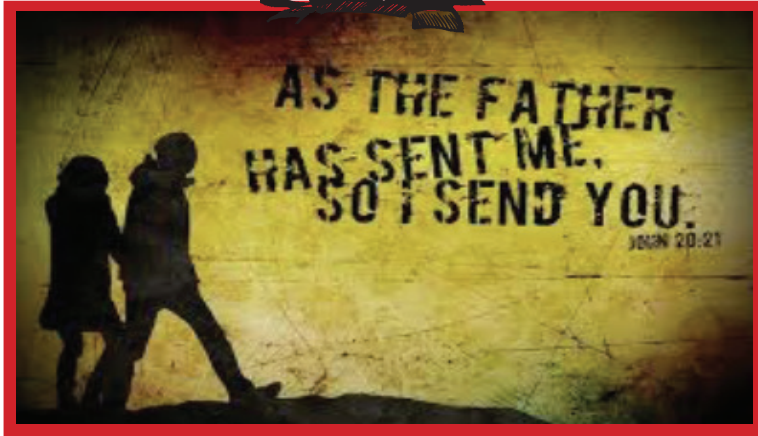
Before I went to China, I listened to two songs over and over: “In My Life” and “If We Never Meet Again This Side of Heaven.” Now, I can’t get enough of “Wonderful Merciful Savior” and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. What a change.

BARB ENDERLY— For a long time I’ve been fearful about praying large, faith-filled prayers because I’ve watched prayers answered in ways I perceived as God saying, “No.” My faith and hope wavered and I was sitting in a place of disappointment.



Through the study of Gideon, I’ve been reminded of God’s faithfulness to me. So I started to list some ways that He has blessed me and my family. I quickly had an “ah ha” moment. I had been deceived into thinking God had said, “No” to me in the past. I was reminded of answers to prayer, and that restored my hope in the Lord. I felt a huge weight that I’d been dragging around for years lift off of me. The song “In Christ Alone (My Hope Is Found)” spoke to me once again of the truth of who God is in my life and how thankful I am to be his— this led me into worship and praise. GOD LOVES ME. He forgives ME and lovingly draws me to himself. I AM HIS BELOVED!





DISCIPLING GROUP LEADERS

BY JANET DUMFORD

The Discipleship Leadership Team of Drew Smith and Elders Janet Dumford, Mark Evans, and Catherine Sanders organized a weekend event for Growth Group leaders and participants on Nov. 11 & 12. The 35 participants were treated to meals, videos of Francis Chan, Jo Saxton, Bill Hull, and others; group discussion; and times of prayer and worship.



The event also provided a discipleship tool, *The Learning Circle* (from 3DM and Mike Breen). Participants practiced using this tool with each other in pairs and triads, helping each other look for ways God is trying to get their attention or speaking into their life.

The attendees also practiced listening well to one another without trying to solve, compare, or interject into what the other was saying. For more information about joining a Growth Group or upcoming growth event, contact Janet Dumford jdumford@chpc.org

The next sign up to participate in a Growth Group will be in the spring during Lent. Watch for announcements about Growth Groups in the *Bell Tower News* and Sunday bulletins.



CHRISTMAS PRESENT TO THE WORLD

BY VERHAGEN & STARE

Jesus was clear: “GO make disciples of all nations (ethnic groups)”... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. Some of us GO to other ethnic groups, some PRAY for Jesus’ work, some GIVE, and some SEND and SUPPORT those who go.

GLOBAL OUTREACH, formerly known as the Cross-Cultural Missions Team, is called to serve CHPC by encouraging all generations to respond to Jesus’ Great Commission.

The new 2022-23 Global Outreach budget maintains our seven Global Worker “units” (six couples, one single) at the same support levels as last year. Additional funds have been designated for youth and adult short-term cross-cultural experiences; an application process will soon be in place.

GROW in “Great Commission Vision”

ATTEND A MONTHLY GLOBAL OUTREACH MEETING

The 3rd Sunday of the month
11:45 AM in the **Fireside Room**.
A light lunch is served at the monthly meetings.

ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, our new Global Workers Gabriel and

Sharleen Howard visited via Zoom.com. They are a young African-American couple. He is from Atlanta; she is from Nairobi, Kenya. They have twin babies. They are teaching English and working with refugees in Nairobi. They have recently begun organizing short-term groups who can profitably assist with their work for a week or two.



ON SUNDAY DECEMBER 18, Lucy Wangechi Gacheru, founder and director of the Hope Children’s Centre of Kenya, will be at CHPC to share the fruits of that ministry.

PARTNERSFORHOPE.WEBBLY.COM

CHPC also has a rich heritage of God calling men and women from the congregation to serve him internationally. Luke and Molly Verhagen, a couple who grew up at CHPC, have begun the process of preparing to work with Wycliffe Bible Translators overseas. Watch for more info from the Verhagens in the January *BTN*.

PRAY FOR GOD’S WORK IN THE WORLD

Global Missions and Global Workers
The 2nd Sunday of the month from
10:05 to 10:25 AM **in the Parlor**.
For Global Outreach prayer requests, email Missions@chpc.org.



COLLEGE HILL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



“Trunk or Treat!”

BY KELLEY FORESMAN & KAREN PEACOCK, PHOTOGRAPHER

On October 31 from 5:00 – 7:00 PM, CHPC in partnership with Pleasant Hill Academy held a Fall Festival at the school. Cars were lined up with trunks decorated with festive decorations when it poured rain! Everyone scrambled to quickly move the event into the cafeteria, where the “Trunk or Treating” commenced— with face painting, live music, and fun with people who cared about them!

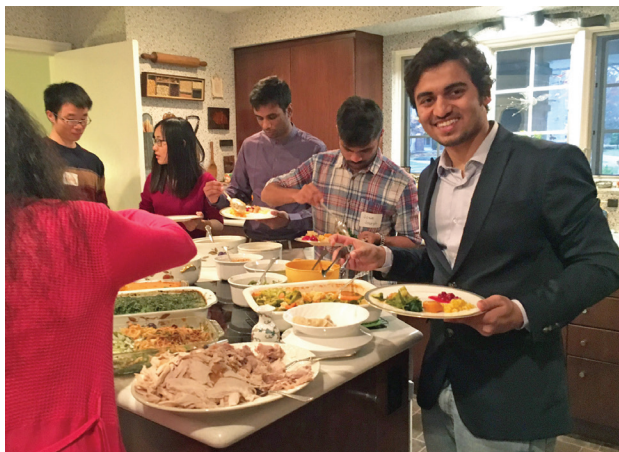
The weather cleared up enough to direct the kids and parents outside to the “Bounce House,” shaved ice truck and petting zoo! There was a great sense of community among everyone who attended and those who assisted with the event. The

pictures tell it all! 15-20 Pleasant Hill staff members— teachers, office staff, a lunchroom workers, and Principal McDowell —participated with volunteers from CHPC. That provided a welcoming and safe environment for families and the students...and a place to learn of God’s love.

Based on the comments from the school’s staff, we had a fantastic turnout of families. The event was deemed a huge success. We are very grateful for all that we (and God) provided. Thanks to all who gave candy, helped with setup, prayed, served, and shared God’s love. It was a delightful *treat* for all!



“THE WORLD IS HERE—INVITE THEM HOME for the HOLIDAYS”



During school breaks and holidays while their American peers go home to be with family, many international students will remain on campus. Being away from family and homeland can be hard enough for an international student. Breaks often serve as additional reminders that they are a foreigner in a foreign land.

Leviticus 19:34 tells how we should treat the foreigner in our communities:

THE FOREIGNER RESIDING AMONG YOU MUST BE TREATED AS YOUR NATIVE-BORN. LOVE THEM AS YOURSELF, FOR YOU WERE FOREIGNERS IN EGYPT. I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD.

Simple acts of hospitality, such as hosting an international student during a school break for a holiday is a great way to love them! Here are hints for sharing your holiday with international students that may help your holiday be the best yet.

Hint #1: Check Details Before Your Student Arrives

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

It is a good idea to check with your international guests about any allergies or dietary restrictions they may have. Culture and religious background play into this. For example,

many Indians may not eat any meat, seafood, or dairy; they might be strict vegans. If they are Muslim or from the Middle East, they won't eat pork. If they are from a culture where food is usually spicy hot, such as Latin America, Southern China, or Southern India, maybe keep a bottle of hot sauce or chili powder on the table for them to use. Many Chinese

may not like a lot of dairy products.

One suggestion would be to have a proposed menu ready and ask if they are unable to eat something on the list. Be mindful, but don't be intimidated. Most internationals are eager to try new “American” food and are very gracious if they cannot eat something you prepared.

HOLIDAY CONVERSATIONS

This is also a great time to explain your family traditions and what you are planning for the festivities of the day. Don't be ashamed if some of these traditions are religious. Often times, Americans shy away from the topic of religion, but many of the holidays we celebrate are very tied to who we are as Christians. It's part of the fabric from which we are woven!

A simple question like “Do you know what we celebrate at Christmas?” could lead to a good discussion with your international student about who God is. Don't force it, but if they seem interested, you can invite questions about any of your traditions or the background behind them. Leila Gardner, IFI Staff, says many students are very curious about these things, just be sure not

to say anything that could be perceived as negative about another religion. Otherwise, be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit in your conversation!

PRAYER BEFORE MEALS

As you start the meal, feel free to offer a table prayer! Some says this is one of the most impactful parts of hosting. “More than one student has told us their very first experience with receiving personal prayer was the first meal they had with their host family. One student shared that the [host] prayed for the meal and included a prayer of thanks to God for bringing their guest. And that just made a huge impact on that person, who eventually came to faith in Christ. But it started with a mealtime prayer...they never heard anybody pray to God in Jesus' name before and the fact that they were included in that prayer was just huge to them.”

To introduce the prayer you can say something like, “Our family prays to God before we eat to thank him for his provision. You can just bow your head and listen.” Another host notes that some students may not feel comfortable holding hands, so be understanding of that.

BE YOURSELF

Don't feel like you need to put on a show or entertain too heavily. Things that are very normal for you may be novel to your guests. Invite them into what you already do! Or, start a new tradition with your international friends. Inviting a stranger into our homes is not only an awesome way to love and serve them, but it's also an amazing way to learn about the world and make friends for a lifetime. Try it once. You might find that hosting internationals improves your “mission vision” forever.

Many thanks to IFI for this advice.
[https:// www.ifipartners.org](https://www.ifipartners.org)





Scripture has much to say about finances overall (over 2,000 verses!), and by far the single most common aspect of stewardship in scripture is Giving. There are likely a number of reasons for this, but the most important one is that giving is what keeps us from worshiping money instead of God. How we use our money actually moves our hearts closer to God or further away from God. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). Looking to develop more of a heart for God? Make an impact with your year-end giving.

We want to ensure you feel absolutely comfortable and secure giving to CHPC now and throughout the year. If you have questions or need help setting up an online gift, please call Heather Lethander at 513-541-5676 extension 1119. All information is confidential and is never written or recorded anywhere but our secure Giving Platform. We're here to help.



Mark your calendars and save the date: *Light Up College Hill* is coming December 8th from 6-8:00 PM! The entire business district along Hamilton Avenue will be transformed into a magical winter wonderland with a train ride for kids, Santa, live reindeer, "goats with coats," activities at many businesses, and much more! CHPC is sponsoring the giant snow-globe.

Don't miss the 3rd annual tree lighting in Patrick's Park at 8 PM. Photos & video from 2021 online at chcurc.com/lightupcollegehill/

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| <p>Deadline for Bell Tower News submissions is the 15th of each MONTH to Sam Stare starecvg@aol.com.</p> | <p>BE PART OF THE TEAM Have something you'd like to write about? Have an idea for a future feature? Email starecvg@aol.com.</p> |
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INFO FROM JANET DUMFORD

ALPHA creates a space for honest conversations about life, faith, meaning, and some of life's biggest questions. It is designed to provide guests an opportunity to connect with one another while providing the opportunity to share thoughts, ideas, and opinions in a safe and caring environment. Alpha helps bring people together while providing the chance to encounter Jesus.

ALPHA STARTS SAT., JANUARY 14, 2023 and continues weekly through April 1 (10:15 AM-12 Noon). Each week, brunch is served. Then, the time is led by the Alpha videos and the ALPHA Team hosts and hostesses.

We're expecting 8-12 guests (or more if God so desires). The planning team consists of: Cathy Smith (Hospitality), Jinda Bowerman (Host/Helper), Cedric Lowe (Music) and me, Janet Dumford (Communications).

PRAY FOR—

1. Those God wants to attend;
2. The Planning Team (listed above);
3. Food: different groups to provide the brunch; and
4. Hosts and hostesses to be part of the ALPHA team as gracious participants during discussions.

It may feel like a long way off, but prayerfully consider your involvement. Please share this with anyone you think might be interested. If Alpha is offered as a "hybrid" (both in-person and online), we will need a Zoom administrator also. PRAY.



WHAT GOD IS REALLY DOING THROUGH CHRISTMAS
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

December 11

A BUN IN THE OVEN – Luke 1:26-38
Who could have come up with such an intimate, secretive, powerful plan to defeat sin and death? God's love and power is so great that he can rescue the world in the most surprising ways.

December 18

GIFTS OF GOLD, GUCCI, AND OLAY – Matthew 2:1-11. Let's celebrate together God's glorious love, mercy, and grace. Like the wise men of old who bring baby Jesus exorbitant gifts, let's worship him with the same overflowing joy. Let's flood God with gratitude for his many gifts.

December 25

WORTH THE WAIT – Luke 2
Advent is a season of waiting for the gift of God to be delivered to each one of us. Christmas is the day of celebration when those gifts finally arrive and we enjoy the camaraderie, satisfaction, and pleasure of being God's family together.



The best Christmas parties have great food, music, lots of fun and laughter! Bring friends. Enjoy appetizers, trivia, karaoke and more!

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ADVENT KICK-OFF
Sunday, November 27th
5-6pm
CHPC Fellowship Hall
*Church will provide soup & beverages.
Please bring a salad to share.
Advent devotionals are designed for all.*

Come to this casual evening and receive a great Advent devotional kit for this Christmas season, suitable for all ages. Bring your family and friends who might be looking for an easy way to make the Advent season more meaningful. We will learn best practices for using our kits to make the most of the Christmas season. The church will provide the soup and beverages. Please bring a salad to share! *RSVP at chpc.org/Christmas.*



The 5 PM Christmas Eve Worship Service perfect for Families is an interactive time to discover more about Jesus as a newborn baby.



The 8 PM Worship Service is a traditional worship service with candlelight Communion in the Sanctuary.



One service on Christmas Day, Sunday, Dec. 25, 10:30 to 11:30 AM in the Sanctuary.



One service on New Year's Day, Sunday, Jan. 1, 10:30 to 11:30 AM in the Sanctuary.

GO ONLINE TO CHPC.ORG/CHRISTMAS FOR THE LATEST NEWS ALSO CHPC.ORG/GIVE