

Community Presbyterian Church

1100 College Avenue

December 2021

Pastor's Corner



With the first snow of the season on the ground, I'm still wondering where the fall went! I am so grateful for the way you have welcomed me into your church family in a very short time.

If the passage of the past three months is any indication, the new year will be upon us before we know it. And with the new year comes the exciting prospect of finding and calling the pastor who will guide Community Pres into a very exciting future.

As I've mentioned before, the first step in the process is to conduct a mission study whose purpose is to identify those aspects of our life together that make us who we are. Critical to that process is looking back at your history, sharing memories of how the church has impacted your lives, and starting to listen for how God's Spirit is calling you to be God's people into the future.

After church on **Sunday, Dec 12**, I hope you will spend the afternoon with many other members of your church family remembering and talking about what has been meaningful for you in your church life. The key to making this a productive and engaging process will be having as much of a variety of perspectives present as possible. It doesn't matter how long you've been part of the Community Pres family, or how involved you've been, each of you has something unique and important to offer. If you know of people who have been involved in the past, but perhaps have not attended lately, I hope

you will invite them, too.

One thing about God that is always true is that God is *always* at work! Even when we're not aware of it, God is at work in us, calling us to serve our communities and the world as God's faithful people. I am very excited to learn more about your history, your experiences with the church, and where you believe God is calling the church in the future.

As we enter this season of Advent, may you feel the excitement of something new and wonderful coming!

With blessings and gratitude,
Pastor John

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Happy Birthday!

Kay Cowin	12/01
Lexie Barbour	12/04
Koreena Stowell	12/05
Linda Weinman	12/08
Caden Fitzgerald	12/12
Tim Schueller	12/13
Neil Smith	12/14
Jim Thornes	12/15
Adysen Osborn	12/20

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Marianne Besaw would like for you to know that there is an app for your phone called "Read Scripture." It can be found in the App Store or Google Play.



The app, according to its description in Google Play, is "the

goal of Read Scripture is that everyone would read the Bible for themselves and discover the truth and beauty of God’s Word.”

It has a year-long reading plan with creative videos that explain every book of the Bible, major theological themes of the gospel, and tips on how to read the Bible.

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“Advent” means “coming” or “arrival.” During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ’s coming into the world and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. In its historical origins, the season of Advent was patterned after the season of Lent, a six-week period of penitence and preparation for Easter. Similarly, the four weeks of Advent present an opportunity for communal discernment and personal examination, as the church prepares to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord and looks with hope for Christ’s return.



## OCC Blessing 2021

Since 1993, shoebox gifts have been delivered to children in more than 160 countries, including more than 50 hard to reach nations. Samaritan’s Purse plans to deliver shoebox gifts and the message of the Gospel to more than 250 unreached people groups by 2024.

Due to cultural, religious, or customs issues it is difficult to deliver gift filled shoeboxes in a number of nations around the world. Your prayerfully packed boxes provide a creative way for believers in these locations to share the Gospel in a culturally sensitive way.

In one hard to reach nation, two brothers, ages 10 & 12, each received their first gift ever in an OCC shoebox. Being from a non-Christian background, they were surprised that their first visit to a church would result in such a wonderful gift.

One day, the church member who distributed the shoebox gift visited the boys’ home. The family was eager to thank this man for the treasures in the shoeboxes. “I love Christians and want to know more about Jesus Christ,” the other said. She began attending church and accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior. She, in turn, shared the Gospel with her mother-in-law and her sister-in-law, resulting eventually in 8 adults and 2 children in the family actively attending church.

Samaritan’s Purse is going across the Pacific bringing joy and The Good News of Jesus Christ to boys and girls on 1000 islands through OCC. They plan to share the love of Christ with over 500,000 children in the Pacific Islands by 2023 as local churches lead shoebox outreach events.

1000 new churches are being planted each year in part because of OCC.

After receiving a shoebox gift, many boys and girls also participate in the 12 lesson follow-up discipleship program. The Greatest Journey, where they learn to follow Jesus and share Him with others. Since 2009

- \*265 million children have enrolled in the program
- \*1.3 million local volunteer teachers have been trained
- \*12.5 million children have reported decisions for Christ



We have increased about 50 more boxes each year since we started. This year we filled 205 boxes. Thanks for the donations, payers, and money to help send the boxes and provide lessons for the children.

Every shoebox gift is an opportunity to reach a child with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It's about telling children around the world and their families that God loves them. We are taking the Good News to the ends of the Earth and doing it through a shoebox.

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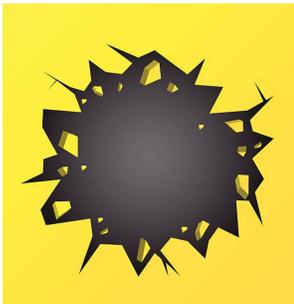
The Tablecloth - A True Story

A neat story.

The brand new pastor and his wife, newly assigned to their first ministry, to reopen a church in suburban Brooklyn, arrived in early October excited about their opportunities. When they saw their church, it was very run down and needed much work. They set a goal to have everything done in time to have their first service on Christmas Eve.

They worked hard, repairing pews, plastering walls, painting, etc, and on December 18 were ahead of schedule and just about finished.

On December 19 a terrible tempest - a driving rainstorm - hit the area and lasted for two days.



On the 21st, the pastor went over to the church. His heart sank when he saw that the roof had leaked, causing a large area of plaster about 20 feet by 8 feet to fall off the front wall of the sanctuary just behind the pulpit, beginning about head high.

The pastor cleaned up the mess on the floor, and not knowing what else to do but postpone the Christmas Eve service, headed home. On the way, he noticed that a local business was having a flea market type sale for charity, so he stopped in. One of the items was a beautiful, handmade, ivory-colored, crocheted tablecloth with exquisite work, fine colors, and a Cross embroidered right in the center. It was just the right size to cover the hole in the front wall. He bought it and headed back to the church.



By this time it had started to snow. An older woman running from the opposite direction was trying to catch the bus. She missed it. The pastor invited her to wait in the warm church for the next bus 45 minutes later. She sat in a pew and paid no attention to the pastor while he got a ladder, hangers, etc., to put up the tablecloth as a wall tapestry. The pastor could hardly believe how beautiful it looked and it covered up the entire problem area.



Then he noticed the woman walking down the center aisle. Her face was like a sheet. "Pastor," she asked, "where did you get that tablecloth?" The pastor explained. The woman asked him to check the lower right corner to see if the initials 'EBG' were crocheted into it there. They were. These were the initials of the woman, and she had made this tablecloth 35 years before, in Austria.

The woman could hardly believe it as the pastor told how he had just gotten "The Tablecloth". The woman explained that before the war she and her husband were well-to-do people in Austria. When the Nazis came, she was forced to leave. Her husband was going to follow her the next week. He was captured, sent to prison and she never saw her husband or her home again.

The pastor wanted to give her the tablecloth, but she made the pastor keep it for the church. The pastor insisted on driving her home. That was the least he could do. She lived on the other side of Staten Island and was only in Brooklyn for the day for a housecleaning job.

What a wonderful service they had on Christmas Eve. The church was almost full. The music and the spirit were great. At the end of the service, the pastor and his wife greeted everyone at the door and many said that they would return. One older man, whom the pastor recognized from the neighborhood, continued to sit in one of the pews and stare, and the pastor wondered why he wasn't leaving.

The man asked him where he got the tablecloth on the front wall because it was identical to one that his wife had made years ago when they lived in Austria before the war and how could there be two tablecloths so much alike?



He told the pastor how the Nazis came, how he forced his wife to flee for her safety and he was supposed to follow her, but he was arrested and put

in prison. He never saw his wife or his home again in all the 35 years between.

The pastor asked him if he would allow him to take him for a little ride. They drove to Staten Island and the same house where the pastor had taken the woman three days earlier.

He helped the man climb the three flights of stairs to the woman's apartment, knocked on the door and he saw the greatest Christmas reunion he could ever imagine.



True story - as told by Pastor Rob Reid who says God does work in mysterious ways.

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A long time coming!
Live and in person!
December 12
during the Worship Service
Join us!



Children's
Christmas Program

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Christmas
Dinner

We are happy to announce that the Christmas Dinner is on this year!

Dinner will be served from 1 - 3 p.m.

Spread the word, please.

This dinner is for anyone who has nowhere else to go or would just like to join us on Christmas Day.

Help is needed as well as food donations. If you can contribute help or food or both, contact Shirley Williams (208) 245-1731.

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Christmas Bazaar

December 3rd
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Raffle Drawing 3 p.m.



*The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.*

*The boundary lines have fallen for me in
pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.*

Psalm 16:5-6

***With life continuing to unfold in
changing and unpredictable ways,
we trust that God's vision
for our future is clear and bright.***

At Community Presbyterian Church, we have faced the challenges of the past year with imagination, joy and faithfulness. We have found new ways to worship, together and virtually. We have continued to serve our community and the world with ministries of support, generous giving and faithful stewardship. And with Pastor Janet's departure we have entered a new chapter in our life together.

While the future may be unclear to us, we remember God's faithfulness to us in the past, and seek to listen for where God is leading us. The "goodly heritage" we share is now in our hands to preserve and celebrate as we seek to better understand how God is calling us to be the church in St. Maries, and in the world.

As you consider your financial commitment to Community Presbyterian Church for the upcoming year, keeping in mind the additional costs associated with carrying out a search for our next Pastor, we hope you will join us in meeting the opportunities and challenges of the upcoming year with confidence, excitement and joy.

The boundary lines have indeed fallen for us in pleasant places, and so we look ahead to where God may be calling us to serve in faithfulness and hope.

Thank you for your faithful support of our church, yesterday, today and all the tomorrows yet to come.

With great gratitude, and joyful expectation...

*The Stewardship Committee of Community
Presbyterian Church*

**Community Presbyterian Church
2022 PLEDGE CARD**

*In gratitude for the "Goodly Heritage" we share through God's grace, and in joyful anticipation of the future God is calling us to, I/we pledge our support to the ministries and mission of Community Presbyterian Church.**

_____ (name) commit to the following financial pledge:

\$ _____ per week

\$ _____ per month

\$ _____ per year

*Only the Financial Secretary will see this information.

If you are able, we invite you to offer your Pledge in worship on Sunday, Dec 12.

Recognizing how God has blessed our history and heritage as a church family, I want to help carry those blessings forward as we seek to discern God's vision for our future.

_____ I want to participate in one or more congregational gatherings to celebrate our past and seek God's will as we begin the process of calling our new pastor. *(Please indicate your willingness to participate in our first workshop after church on Dec 12 on the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board outside the church office.)*

_____ I would be willing to be a member of a Pastor Nominating Committee.

_____ I am willing to support our transition process as needed (helping set up for gatherings, providing food, administrative support, etc.)

_____ I will support our congregation and Pastor Nominating Committee through prayer and encouragement.

Name: _____