

Community Presbyterian Church

1100 College Avenue

January 2022



Pastor's Corner

As I write this, my mind is awirl...who have I forgotten to buy a gift for? What time does Claire (my daughter) arrive tonight? What is the weather doing and how will it impact my ability to get to St Maries for Christmas Eve?

In other words, I'm worrying about a lot of things.

Why, despite my best efforts, does this season of Christmas always seem to culminate in a crescendo of stress?

A neighbor knocks at my door. Frustrated at the interruption, I open the front door, and find my neighbor there offering me some Christmas cookies, and wanting to wish us a Merry Christmas. We chat briefly, and then she continues on her way, more cookies to deliver.

As I close the door, I chastise myself for being so caught up in the things I'm worried about that I forget to simply experience the joys that the season

brings. My mom is with us for Christmas. The brilliance of the snow outside, and the warmth of our house. A neighbor bringing cookies.

Worrying is simply a form of fear, and I do it a lot. I wonder why, when I have so much to be thankful for, am I so preoccupied with what I am, essentially, fearful of?

I have spent a lot of time this fall talking about fear vs faith. Perhaps that comes out of my own recognition of my susceptibility to worry and fear. While I wish I could say I'd made more progress in choosing faith over fear, perhaps it is enough that I'm at least thinking about it.

This baby whom we celebrate...perhaps the best gift I can offer him right now is my fear, in the hope that somehow he can do something with it that I can't. Perhaps, somehow, he will accept my fear, and transform it into faith.

"Be not afraid," the angel said. I will try.

May your fears, too...whatever they may be...be transformed into faith by this child whom we receive as Savior. May our worry be calmed by the Prince of Peace.

Pastor John

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|-------------------------|------|
| Karl Scott              | 1/03 |
| Nisha (Humphrey) Banjao | 1/10 |
| Esme Scott              | 1/11 |
| Michael Anderson        | 1/19 |
| Tom Bronson             | 1/24 |
| Ed Moya                 | 1/24 |
| Sue Page                | 1/24 |

Epiphany is the celebration of God's manifestation or self-revelation to the world in Jesus Christ. In particular, we celebrate the revelation of God's promise and purpose to the nations of the world, as the magi came from the East to worship to the Christ child, and God's covenant of grace is extended to all who believe the good news of Christ Jesus. The symbolism of light is important: not only because of the star that guided the magi, but as it relates to the bright dawning of God's self-revelation in Christ.



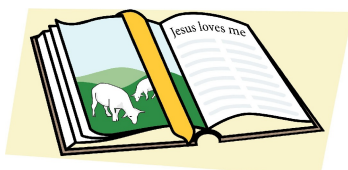
An excerpt from the Companion to the Book of Common Worship (Geneva Press, 2003, 94-95)

The word "epiphany" (from the Greek epiphaneia or theophaneia) means "appearance" or "manifestation" of God, and has roots in the word for sunrise or dawn. In ancient times, an epiphany meant either a visible manifestation of a god or the solemn visit of a ruler venerated as a god.

For Christians, Christmas marks the coming of God to us; Epiphany celebrates the appearance of the Lord in the midst of humanity. The Christmas stories of the birth of Immanuel declare the divine entry; Epiphany extols the revelation of God to the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

In our celebrations of Christmas and Epiphany we rejoice in the dawning and the arising of Light in darkness. ... Epiphany not only discloses the Savior to the world but also calls the world to show forth Christ, to be witnesses to God's true Light. The timeless mystery of the incarnation, God in flesh, leads us forth to show and tell of Christ as God's gift of grace and salvation for all persons. Some call this ongoing epiphany the work of Christmas.

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If you are looking for verses with which to support slavery, you will find them. If you

are looking for verses with which to abolish slavery, you will find them. If you are looking for verses with which to oppress women, you will find them. If you are looking for verses with which to liberate or honor, you will find them. If you are looking for reasons to wage war, you will find them. If you are looking for reasons to promote peace, you will find them. If you are looking for an out-dated, irrelevant ancient text, you will find it. If you are looking for truth, believe me, you will find it.

This is why there are times when the most instructive question to bring to the text is not "what does it say?" but "What am I looking for?" I suspect Jesus knew this when he said, "ask and it will be



given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened."



If you want to do violence in this world, you will always find the weapons. If you want to heal, you will always find the balm.



~ ~ Rachel Held Evans

Mahatma Gandhi often walked barefoot which produced an impressive set of callouses on his feet. He also ate very little, making him rather frail and with his odd diet he often suffered from bad breath. This made him a super calloused fragile mystic hexed with halitosis.

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## Here I Am, Lord

I, the Lord of the sea and sky,  
I heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save  
I who made the stars of the night,  
I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear my light to them?  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.

I will go, Lord, if you lead me.  
I will hold Your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain,  
I have borne my people's pain.  
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone.  
Give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak My word to them.  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.  
I will hold Your people in my heart.

– Daniel I. Shutte, 1981

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Two little boys were known troublemakers, stealing everything they could get their hands, even from the church. One day a minister stopped one of the boys and asked, "Where is God?" The boy shrugged and the minister repeated, "Where is God?" The boy, crying, ran home where he hid in a closet. Eventually, his brother found him and asked, "What's wrong?" The crying boy replied, "We're in trouble now! God is missing and they think we took Him!"

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## *Thank You*

Since the very first time Charlie and I walked into Community Presbyterian Church, we have felt we were home. In no other church in our married life have we felt the love, the inclusion, the support and acceptance that we have here. We still get overwhelmed at times.

Charlie and I have always been the givers and the caretakers so it seems very odd to be on the other side of that. We have felt the prayers, the caring and the loving that have held us up since September 29, 2020 when I had the first hip replacement. You got us through the "slogging across the swamp" the next 13 months (and still).

Charlie and I **thank you** so much for the money

and gift card. Y'all are just amazing! It is such a wonderful surprise and so appreciated as our truck decided it doesn't want to run. We'll be using it for that.

No word or combination of words can accurately express our love and appreciation for all of you. We can't imagine our world without each and every one of you.

Charlie and Sandy



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## **The Coming of God by Ann Weems**

Our God is the One who comes  
to us

In a burning bush  
in an angel's song  
in a newborn child.



Our God is the One who cannot be found  
locked in the church  
not even in the sanctuary.

Our God will be where God will be  
with no constraints,  
no predictability.

Our God lives where our God lives,  
and destruction has no power  
and even death cannot stop the living.

Our God will be born where God will be born,  
but there is no place to look for the One  
who comes to us.

When God is ready  
God will come  
even to a forsaken place  
like a stable in Bethlehem.

Watch.....  
For you know not when  
God comes.

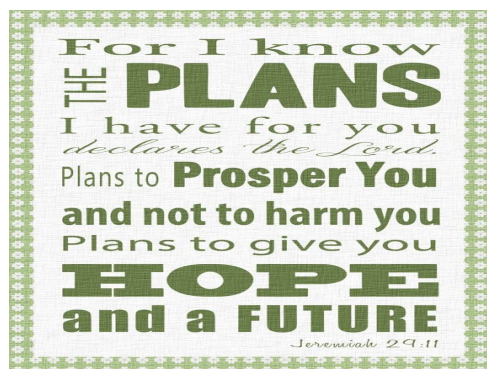
Watch that you might be found  
whenever  
wherever  
God comes.

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January Dates

1/01 New Year's Day
1/06 Epiphany
1/09 Annual Meeting after worship
1/12 Bazaar Committee Meeting - Noon
1/16 Religious Freedom Day
1/17 Martin Luther King Jr. Day
1/18 Winnie the Pooh Day
1/21 National Hug Day

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Christmas Bazaar

The 2021 Bazaar brought in \$6K+ which will be shared with our church and other community organizations that need support.

We are blessed to be a blessing to others!!
Thank you all for such hard work and tremendous giving!!

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## Undecorating Day

Saturday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. the undecorating of the church will begin. All helpers will be rewarded with a surprise lunch!



## Christmas Day Dinner

With Shirley Williams at the helm, the Christmas Day dinner went very well. And, you, our members, came through once again with food and help.

There was one gentleman who couldn't believe there was no charge for the meal and that he didn't have to do anything for his and his 98-year old mother's dinners. He was told it was God's love for him and therefore ours. He was amazed.

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Remember in your prayers the Session, the members who will be asked to serve on the Pastor Nominating Committee, the members of a newly formed PNC, and the pastor whom God has chosen for our church as well as Pastor John as he guides us through the process.

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