



The Courier

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Gospel calls us to love, reconciliation, and unity. That's why, as you all know by now (I hope!), I'm a great critic of the division that characterizes American life now and has for 10 or 20 years or so. I can't talk too much about that division in sermons, and so these Courier letters provide a helpful forum (for me, at least) to talk about some things that aren't so easy to get at on a Sunday morning. So, let's think about our tribalism. There are many factors driving it.



The easiest to think about is this: this is what our politicians do, and it gets a lot of exposure in the media. That's been talked about a lot in other sources, and I don't need to go into it.

A second important driver for tribalism is that this is simply what we humans do. We are tribal people. We're always squaring off against some "other" group, because doing so reinforces our own identity. I may have told you that I was once a volunteer firefighter. We were great rivals of the other fire company in the township. We *knew* they had better funding, better equipment, etc., etc. and it became tribal; us vs. them. We get tribal about high school rivalries, our churches, and on and on. Why not about our political tribes, as well?

There's yet another factor driving division. Frank Bruni notes that we all have so much information coming at us all the time through social media. It pours into our ears, eyes, heads and hearts through the internet, Facebook, TV, radio, print, conversations and more. It's more than we can take in. Somehow, though, we have to distill this information, categorize it, prioritize it, and try to make sense of it. In the end, the easiest way to do that is to let our tribe handle it. It's easier to listen to what Mitch McConnell, Tucker Carlson, Nancy Pelosi, or Anderson Cooper say than it is to try and digest all this information ourselves.

And it's not simply that we allow others to digest this overload of information. Because there's a firehose of information being blasted at us all the time, it also becomes easiest to simply listen to one "side" – our pre-chosen side. It would be a lot of work for the average person to wade through everything com-



THE 2022 **FLOWER CALENDAR** is on the bulletin board at the top of the stairs. The cost is \$25 per bouquet. Make your check out to the Guild for Christian Service. Fill out a slip with your dedication wording and leave it on the desk in the church office.

One Spring Street, PO Box 185, Harrington Park NJ 07640

Community Church in Harrington Park

The Courier
published by

the Community Church in
Harrington Park

The Rev. Steve Sayer, Pastor,

Office--201-768-2457;

Cell--570-656-1412;

Home--201-768-2474

Community Church email:

cchp@verizon.net

The Rev. Charles P. Johnson,

Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. George V. Kaden,

Pastor Emeritus

Pastor's Letter(cont'd)

ing at us, so we only listen to people who we agree with. While this is easy and comfortable, this is a fundamentally flawed approach to keeping informed. It is, frankly, better to be under-informed than to be "fully" informed but only from one perspective.

There are so many ideas, proposals, policies that we're talking about at any one time. A fundamental truth about debates is that there would be no debate if there weren't legitimate points to be made on both sides. There is such a category of ideas as things that are commonly accepted. For example, we have all been raised to believe that democracy and freedom are good things and worth striving for. It's not quite a fact – it might be hard to empirically prove – but we all believe it anyway. Then there's this other category of ideas – those that are worthy of debate – those ideas in which both sides can come up with advantages and disadvantages, as well.

We have lost sight of the notion that debate is necessary to distill the advantages and disadvantages of ideas. Instead of engaging in legitimate, honest debate, we have simply substituted propaganda – that rhetoric which supports our preordained viewpoint. It need not even be entirely truthful. And we're wielding that propaganda like baseball bats hoping the last man standing wins.

Look – the reality is that most of us don't have the time to read both of, say, *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* each day. And a great many of us – justifiably – simply don't have the interest in doing so either. So, there's something I think we could do: try to be informed by different perspectives at the level we're comfortable with. If you watch Wolf Blitzer and Brett Baier (CNN on the left and Fox on the right) on alternating nights, you'd be pretty well informed from two different perspectives at a basic level. Or if you read *The New York Times* Opinion section and picked out four, five or six columnists who write from differing perspectives, and read their stuff consistently, you'd have the benefit of both some good ideas to think about and differing ideologies from which to think about them. But this business of relying on only one source for our news (whichever side you choose) ... Well, we might as well just take a little cyanide every day. It would have the same effect on us, our culture, and our country.

Okay. That's enough for now. I think I might try and think a little more about this topic next month, as well. It's a privilege to serve Him with you.

Grace and peace,



UNITY PRAYER: God, songs like, "How Great Thou Art" and "Amazing Grace" can't completely capture Your amazing love for us and Your saving grace, so we simply sing hallelujah and praise to Your name.

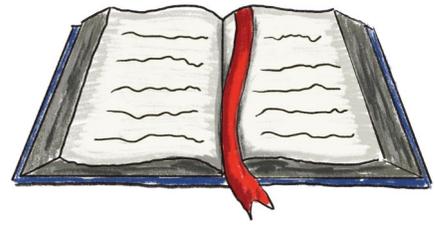
OUTREACH **NINA POND**

Help tackle hunger with CFA's 6th annual Souper Bowl fundraiser. Bring cans of your favorite hearty soup and place them in the receptacle in the narthex. Monetary donations are also welcome. The deadline for drop-off is Thursday, February 11th. If you have any questions, please call Nina Pond at 646-285-3349 or email her at ninamariepond@gmail.com.



Pastor's Project

LET'S KEEP UP OUR READING



We've been reading the Bible together for a little over four months now. I hope it's going okay for you. Reading the Bible is like anything – you do it and you get it; you get it and you do it. I've started to do some cooking over the last couple years. I'm starting to understand it a little better. As I understand it, it's easier for me to make a good meal, and I want to do it more. Look, most of us in our congregation are at a beginner or intermediate level in terms of our Scripture reading. We're not going to understand everything the first time through. And so, we've got to keep plugging away at it. My friends, keep plugging away. It will make more and more sense to you the more you keep doing it!!

And, if you've gotten off track, just start again. Pick up with where we're supposed to be and start reading. If you didn't start when we did in late September, start now. There's nothing magical about the order of biblical books we've been reading up until now. Just dig in – you'll get it.

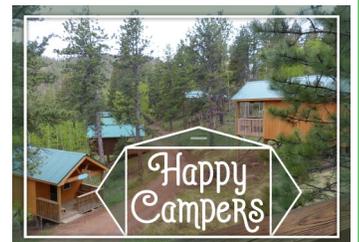
There is something that might help you in your Scripture reading. There's nothing like a good study Bible for filling in some gaps. It has notes, maps, and charts that make understanding the Bible a little easier. I was reading in Deuteronomy the other evening. It kept mentioning place names, and I wasn't exactly sure where all those places were. I happened to be reading in my Kindle, so I could google those spots. But if I had been in my study Bible, there would have been a convenient map that I could have quickly consulted. The study Bible I really like is the fully revised NIV Study Bible from Zondervan. But there are a lot of others out there that are also really helpful.

The Word of God is at the heart of our faith.

I hope you'll make the five to ten minutes a day it takes to learn the Word.

THE WARWICK CONFERENCE CENTER NEEDS A HAND

The Warwick Conference Center has been the camp and conference ministry of our synod, The Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, and also the Synod of New York for decades now. Some of us have great memories of going there as a kid or adult. You can imagine that this pandemic has wreaked havoc on their ministry. They have slashed staff and managed to weather the storm... until now. The Omicron surge has caused a flood of cancellations just when they thought they would be able to accommodate guests once again. They now need a bit over \$60,000 to keep their head afloat through the end of Omicron. Our consistory has agreed to give the Warwick Conference Center \$5000 from The Foundation. If you would like to make a contribution, you can do so by sending a check to: Warwick Conference Center P.O. Box 349 Warwick, New York 10990



FINANCE

JOAN HOERAUF & LES COX

Thanks to all for keeping up with your pledges. January ended on a positive note. If you have not made your pledge for 2022, it is not too late. As you are aware, we are using the faith promise system this year. Fill out the pledge card, place it in an envelope, and seal the envelope. Address it to yourself and place it in the offering plate. We really would appreciate it.

WOMEN'S BREAKFAST MINISTRY

SANDY BENNINGTON

Our next Women's Ministry Breakfast will take place in person in Founders' Hall on Saturday, March 5, at 9:30 AM. If you are not receiving emails about the breakfast, or if you know someone who should receive our emails, please let me know and I will add you to the list. My email is:



sbennington@optonlinenet.

CHILDREN PROGRAMS

Sunday School and Puppet Club resumed on Sunday, February 6 at 10 AM. They will be combined in Founders Hall.

PUPPETS

Puppets has resumed - YAY!!!! We are meeting in conjunction with Sunday School and all at the same time - 10:00 AM in Founders Hall. The first half of the session will be a Sunday School lesson - then all the children from the Sunday School class will participate with the puppets. We are working on a new skit to be performed in front of the congregation. This is a fun time for all children. Come and join us. Any questions, please call me at (201) 768-0733 or email me at jhoerauf@naihanson.com. Miss Joan



MUSIC PROGRAM

AMY DURAN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

CCHP CHANCEL CHOIR

Dennis Novak, Chancel Choir President

I hope you all had a chance to hear us sing either in person or via the church website postings of the Sunday worship. During these trying times we are trying our best to make your worship experience more meaningful through music. As we move into 2022, we are hopeful that things will begin to open up more from COVID. With that in mind, we are always looking for a few more voices; so, if you are of a mind and voice, we have a spot waiting for you to sing to the glory of God. You do not need to read music, (I do not myself) so come join us Thursday evenings at 7:30 PM. We are led by our music director, Amy Duran.



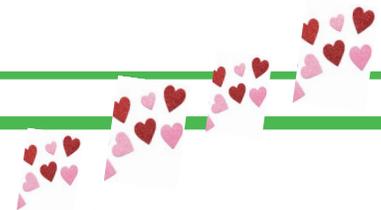
PRAYER REQUESTS



Barbara Ciannella, who has blessed us with her organ and piano playing down through the years and more recently on a monthly basis, fell and fractured her wrist. This required surgery. Pray for her speedy recovery. If you'd like to send her a card, her address is 1060 Blanche Avenue, Norwood, NJ 07648.

SNL

You may have noticed in the Harrington Park Town Newsletter that a program had been scheduled for February 5 about the making of a Saturday Night Live episode. Because Covid cases haven't declined enough yet, we are postponing until further notice.



WORSHIP

SANAE TOMITA & CHRIS NOVAK

Please join us for Sunday worship in the sanctuary as Covid numbers drop and we safely gather together with recommended masks and social distancing. We are happy to have the chancel choir back and Nate Giordano leading us in singing the Psalms and playing guitar and bass twice a month. Thank you to our music director, Amy Duran, for inspirational choir, prelude and postlude selections. We appreciate your remaining seated after the benediction to enjoy the postlude at the close of worship.



Wednesday, March 2 begins the season of Lent. We will gather at 7:30 PM for weekly Wednesday night worship services with the Christian education committee providing a children's Lenten program in Founders' Hall. The 40 days of Lent are a time of spiritual preparation and reflection. How are you planning to use this time? Maybe you will commit to reading a daily devotion or participate in the Bible-reading program? One sure way to make Lent spiritually productive is by attending both Sunday and Wednesday worship services culminating with the Maundy Thursday service on April 14, a virtual Good Friday offering and Easter Sunday worship at 6:30 and 10:00 AM.

Presently, we are scheduling two ushers to be in the narthex greeting and distributing the bulletin. On Sunday morning we ask two additional people to assist with collecting the offering. Please let Sanae or Chris know if you would be willing to serve as an usher.

If you cannot attend worship, the service is recorded. Thanks to Christian Brueck for running the video camera. Usually, the worship service is posted on the church website by Sunday evening, www.cchpchurch.org. You will find it under the Worship Videos tab.

We are looking forward to resuming "normal worship services" and fellowship this year. We miss Coffee Hour!



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Anonymous; Lynn Baker; Barbara Ciannella; Marilyn Hams; Nancy Lanzalotto; Charles Moorman; Ed Serrano; Richard Smyth; Craig Terjanian.

Sunday Service @ 10 am

Worshipping in Our Sanctuary

TO PROVIDE INSPIRATION AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

We recommend masks and social distancing for everyone's safety.



CCHP MEN'S MEETING

BOB CARR



Our Men's Group will be meeting in person **MEN'S GROUP** this Saturday morning (2/12) at 9 AM. We invite all men to join for the first live meeting in quite a while.

WE ARE COLLECTING BABY ITEMS!

Some of you are aware that our pastor and his wife, Steve and Jeri, are currently fostering a baby girl, Norah, who was born just before Christmas. A few ladies of the church have organized a collection of baby items to help them with their fostering. If you would like to help, please purchase any of the items below or anything else you can think of that they might need, and leave them in the narthex.

ITEMS NEEDED:

- Huggies diapers, size 1
- Clothing, size 0-3 months
- Onesies
- Baby socks
- Baby wipes
- Rattles
- Baby books/board books
- Any infant toys

- Bibs
- Boppy
- Sleepsack
- Baby headbands
- Teethers
- Infant carrier



Thank you!



One Spring Street
PO Box 185
Harrington Park NJ 07640

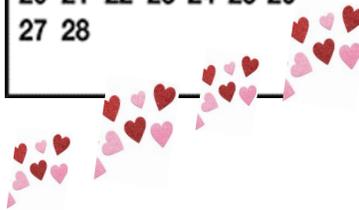
www.cchpchurch.org



AT A GLANCE
FEBRUARY:
Black History Month — February 1-28
Groundhog Day — February 2
Valentine's Day — February 14
Presidents' Day — February 21



February 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					



NEXT COURIER DEADLINE:

March 6, 2022