

Clifton Presbyterian Church

Celebrating Fifteen (15) Decades of Service and Gratitude

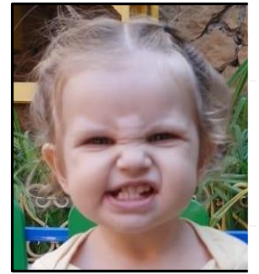


2020 – A Year Like No Other!



“WHEN UP ON LIFE’S BILLOWS YOU ARE TEMPEST-TOSSED ... WHEN YOU ARE DISCOURAGED, THINKING ALL IS LOST ...”

Covid-19, Racial Unrest, Riots, Cries to Defund the Police, Crackdown on Hong Kong Protestors, Contested Elections, Our Nation Divided ...



Pastor Jeri Fields had been with CPC one year as our Interim/Transitional Minister when 2020 was rung in. We had been preparing for the “kick-off” of our 150th Anniversary Celebration to be held on January 26, when on Jan. 7, the World Health Organization (WHO) released news of a novel coronavirus in Wuhan, China. Few thought this virus would actually reach our shores let alone affect our little town of Clifton, so planning continued. It was to be a full year of celebrations

including a written history and costumed skit for the 4th Sunday of each month throughout 2020, and a lunch or dinner to culminate the celebration in Nov. or Dec. A bulletin



150th ANNIVERSARY OF CLIFTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Celebrating Fifteen (15) Decades of Service and Gratitude



Telling our history decade by decade on the 4th Sunday of each month with special events

planned throughout the year. May 16th, Mad Hatter Tea Party – all ages welcome; June 28 - “Homecoming” for past pastors and friends; summer concerts in July and August; Sept. 27th – Preschool “Homecoming” and more.

Please check out our website: www.cliftonpc.org and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Clifton-Presbyterian-Church>



board and a Saints Candle were prepared to honor the Saints of the decades; a special shadow box table was built to display historical documents and items of

interest; and the original slatted doors were refurbished. Following the January “kickoff” service, a reception was held in the Fellowship Hall with another Bette Petersen cake!



Meanwhile – on Jan. 11 China recorded the first death from the coronavirus; on Jan. 16, President Donald J. Trump’s impeachment trial began; on Jan. 20, the U.S. reported the first coronavirus case in Washington State; on Jan. 23 Wuhan went into lockdown; and on Jan. 31 President Trump imposed a nationwide travel ban from China. The President was acquitted by the Senate on Feb. 5, and on Feb. 11, the coronavirus got a new name – COVID-19.



In February, CPC continued with weekly services, appointed a Pastor Nominating Committee to begin the search for a new Pastor, and celebrated the 2nd month of the 150th Anniversary with Vintage Valentines sent to Nursing Homes, a written history of the decades 1890-1910, and another skit. Covid-19 worsened in March, and WHO declared a PANDEMIC on March 11. On Friday, March 13, Trump declared a national emergency. Schools closed and the doors to Clifton Presbyterian Church also closed.



“COUNT YOUR MANY BLESSINGS NAME THEM ONE BY ONE, AND IT WILL SURPRISE YOU WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE!”



We were in uncharted waters. The needs were great, and though the church doors



closed, our hearts were open. The Needlework

Ministry began sewing masks for hospitals; food was collected curb side and delivered to WFCM; AND we worshiped Live online on Sunday, at 10 AM on March 15 – not missing a Sunday!! There were some hiccups, but thanks to the efforts of Pastor Jeri, and our



Director of Music, John Kim and other tech-savvy members, CPC was continuing to do God's work in the world – and was closing in on becoming Hi-tech! By April, we were “ZOOMING” – with worship, prayer groups, Session and committee meetings, weekly PNC and choir meetings, the Needlework Ministry, Book Club, OWLS, and TLC – connected to one another. The skits became radio broadcasts, the lighting of the candle and the choir became virtual.



The skits became radio broadcasts, the lighting of the candle and the choir became virtual.

We celebrated milestones like graduations and farewells with drive-thru

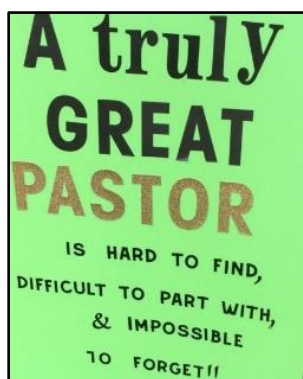


celebrations, including Pastor Jeri's Farewell Parade in September. Our Christian Education Committee delivered Vacation Bible School packages to each child's home and continued with monthly “surprises.” We were learning to live in these uncharted waters.

“ARE YOU EVER BURDENED WITH A LOAD OF CARE? DOES THE CROSS SEEM HEAVY YOU ARE CALLED TO BEAR?”

Due to the spread of Covid-19, most 2020 events were postponed including the Summer Olympics in Tokyo. The Lucy Burns museum, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 20th amendment did open in January, but the Grand Opening that was scheduled for May, was re-envisioned. The shutdown of the country with the closure of schools, businesses, restaurants, gyms, and more has led to feelings of isolation, loneliness, and in many cases – fear and desperation. In May, the tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, MN at the hands of a police officer, became a rallying cry for the Black Lives Matter Movement. Protests were held in cities around the nation, some violent. Racism reared its ugly head and it seemed we were returning to the turmoil of the Sixties – all in the midst of a Pandemic! The town of Clifton hung a BLM banner – some residents expressed pride that their “village” had taken a stand. The wife of Justice Clarence Thomas condemned the banner, seeing it as justifying the controversial aspects of the BLM movement. Her comments in the paper led to Clifton being once again in the national media. The banner was stolen on July 20, 2020. The country is divided.

“COUNT YOUR MANY BLESSINGS, EV'RY DOUBT WILL FLY, AND YOU WILL BE SINGING AS THE DAYS GO BY.”



The PNC continued their work successfully in the midst of the Pandemic, the Primaries, and the Protests! Our long awaited new Pastor was called in July, and began her ministry on September 28, 2020. This was most welcome news! Pastor Jeri had done a wonderful job keeping us connected in these difficult times, and we wanted her to know how loved and appreciated she was as we bid her farewell with a drive-thru celebration on Sept. 26,



which included balloons, flowers, this poster, a prayer shawl, a memorial brick and a memory album.



Welcomed with only a banner and warm wishes in these abnormal times, the Rev. Dr. Diane Walton Hendricks, preached her first sermon as our new Pastor on Oct. 4, 2020. She wasted no time – jumping right in – helping



the members that were collecting and delivering food to those in need; getting acquainted in our “new normal” Covid-19 environment by inviting members individually to “Conversations on the Porch” – which were well attended, “masked,” and much appreciated; and she led our first “lantern lit” Vesper Service

on a warm November evening – our first in person gathering for worship since early March – outdoors, masked, and socially distanced, of course. Will we even recognize each other when we are able to unmask?



Election Day 2020 is finally behind us! A record number voted early, both by mail and in person, due to fears associated with Covid-19. It took a while to determine the outcome due to the millions of mail-in ballots and the record number of voters, but President-Elect Joe Biden, emerged the winner. On his ticket is the 1st woman Vice President, Kamala Harris. She is also the 1st Indian American and the 1st Black American woman Vice President.

When this story began in December 1870, the world population was 1.2 billion and the membership in Clifton Presbyterian Church was 9. The world population is now 7.8 billion and our membership numbers 149, with an online weekly attendance averaging 82. We have ways of communicating and traveling that were unknown 150 years ago – some unknown 20 years ago! But, we still have a congregation that loves the Lord and their fellow man, and works hard to make a difference in a “geographically shrinking” world. The Officers of the Church now include 12 Session members, 9 Deacons, 1 Youth Deacon, 3 Trustees, 1 Treasurer and 2 assistant treasurers. The staff consists of our Pastor, Music Director, Office Manager, Nursery Attendant, and Music Intern. The Preschool has an Interim Director and a Preschool Administrator. Thankfully, it was able to open its doors in September to approximately 27 “masked” little ones, even though public school buildings in much of the country remain closed while providing virtual classrooms. The Manse is a work in progress. The tenants vacated in 2019 and a work committee was formed for much needed renovations under the direction of Rich Coyle. Several church-wide workdays were scheduled prior to Covid-19 but money was tight, so work was put on hold while discussions regarding its use are ongoing. Possibilities include a museum in partnership with Clifton; a return to the rental market; or keeping it for church use.

As 2020 draws to a close, and we approach the Christmas season, we mourn the more than 300,000 American lives lost to Covid-19, but we are grateful for the incredible efforts of “Operation Warp Speed” which has enabled the development of multiple vaccines in record time. We are grateful for SpaceX’s successful launch in November, which sent 4 Americans to the International Space Station on an **American** space craft. We are grateful for the prospects of peace in the Middle East for the first time in decades! And, in this year like no other, we are grateful for our remembrances of Christmases past when we gathered together in our beautiful sanctuary to celebrate Jesus’ birth and sing Silent Night by candlelight.



Margaret Detwiler Webb, whose name has appeared throughout our history, joined this church in 1916. She wrote of her Christmas remembrances – *“Our Church by Oil Lamp Light”* – in an Advent booklet prepared by CE in 1995. She was 93. She recalls the night of the annual Sunday School Christmas party. . . . *“Years ago, when I was a child of seven, [1909] our family had just moved from the Philippine Islands to a farm near Clifton. At that time, the Church was lighted by oil lamps and heated by two big iron stoves, one on the right side corner as you come in, the other where the choir now sits.*



Brackets held the kerosene lamps on the side walls and (there was) a huge circular chandelier hanging in the center with oil lamps fitted into it. The night of the Christmas program, my sister, brother, and I stayed with my Grandmother, who lived in the Village. After the evening meal and the time came to go, we lit an oil lantern to light our way to Church. Arriving there, as we went in, it was to me the most beautiful sight I had ever seen. The fragrance from the cedar tree was lovely. The huge tree seemed to touch the ceiling. The ornaments and tinsel reflected beautifully off the lamplight. Under the tree were all kinds of toys . . . We all had a part in the program, recitations and carols; then there were the shepherds with their crooks, wise men, and the Holy Family. Then each child was given a toy, candy, and an orange . . . But the picture I saw as I came in . . . and the fragrance of the cedar are the memories I will always hold and cherish . . .”

. . . Though Christmas 2020 may be different – with families separated; and no beloved children’s Christmas pageant, traditional Christmas Eve services, or decorated interior – we found new ways to celebrate our Savior’s birth. We had a living Nativity on our front lawn. Pastor Diane, with the help of Christian Education, led us on an outdoor Journey to Bethlehem, and we will worship virtually on Christmas Eve. May the voices of the Saints from ages past remind us of the many blessings that have been bestowed on our church, no matter the decade, and may we have Faith that these blessings will continue to flow for generations to come.



The church doors may have been closed in 2020, but our hearts have remained open.

**“SO AMID THE CONFLICT, WHETHER GREAT OR SMALL,
DO NOT BE DISCOURAGED; GOD IS OVER ALL . . .
COUNT YOUR MANY BLESSINGS; ANGELS WILL ATTEND,
HELP AND COMFORT GIVE YOU TO YOUR JOURNEY’S END.
COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS; NAME THEM ONE BY ONE. COUNT YOUR MANY BLESSINGS,
SEE WHAT GOD HATH DONE!”**

Text by Johnson Oatman, Jr. 1897

Published December 20, 2020