

■ January 2021

ONLINE EDITION

The
Irvington
Presbyterian Church Est. 1906
www.irvpresby.org

"MY PRAYER FOR 2021 IS..."

My prayer for 2021 is that the youth continue to feel God's presence and guidance during these uncertain times. I pray



that they remain diligent in school work and home life as they

hope for a time to be with friends, peers and families again.

--Aerial Lewis

My wish for 2021 is to make music with all the wonderful musicians of IPC in person again.

--Amy Studabaker



My prayer for 2021 is that this congregation emerges from the pandemic with a renewed spirit to serve God and each other with energy, intelligence, imagination and love. (And that I can get back to the Y soon!)

--Rev. Heimach



My prayer for 2021 is for a revival in our nation;

for hearts to be changed and renewed with the love of Jesus Christ. May health and healing be restored to those suffering. Let justice be restored for all of God's children. In Jesus Name, Amen!

--Denise Harrington



My prayer for 2021 is that our lives would be filled with and overflowing with the power of God's love so we can make a difference in this world.



--Lori Chapman

My prayer for 2021 is for all to have a healthy year, in body, mind, and spirit.

--Rev. Wilson



My prayer for 2021 is for justice and healing for our nation & world.

--Carolyn Lesmeister



My prayer for 2021 is to see an end to COVID restrictions. To worship the Trinity with a full congregation and choir. To sing Holy, Holy Holy! Lord God Almighty powerful enough to wake up the late sleepers in the neighborhood. I'm getting excited already. Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!!!

--Joe Dial



My prayer for 2021 is that we, as God's people, work together to build a more just and equitable society for all according to the message of the Gospels. I also pray that we can soon meet in public places without masks and worrying about virus spreading.

--Craig Shaw



Dear Presbyterians,

Headed into 2021, what this congregation gets is nothing less than a new Irvington Presbyterian Church. Oh, the building and grounds are the same (albeit a new sound system that most of you have not heard), but the pandemic has shifted our focus into a new awareness of each other and our ministries. A quick review of the new IPC is in order:

- We are aware that we can still “be the church” outside the walls of the building.
- We are aware that we can connect to each other without being physically present with each other.
- We are aware that the church can survive and even thrive when we make our focus the love and care of each other and the community.
- We are aware that we can lament our losses and celebrate our joys before God in multiple ways, ... in a phone call, a letter, in a prayer, in listening to worship from our living room.
- We are aware that we can worship God anywhere, anytime, and not just on Sunday morning at 10 a.m.
- We are aware that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ.

This new awareness of who we are as a church, encourages me to think that 2021 can be an exciting year for the church. Sure, more changes will surely be upon us, but we will take them as they come.

Through who we were as a church and now who we are as a church, thank you for being a congregation that trusts in the promise of God.

In Christ's peace,



CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY

Our Christian sympathy goes to Lori Chapman, IPC Administrator, and her family on the death of her father, Bob DeWitt, on January 1, 2021.

DEACONS NEWS

Thank you to everyone who donated a poinsettia this year and to the deacons for delivering poinsettias to the ill and homebound.

MEETING:

Deacons will meet via zoom on January 29th at 6:30

COFFEE HOUR IS COMING!

On Sunday, January 24th at 11 a.m. after worship, please join us for a “Virtual Coffee Hour” on a whole congregational Zoom call. We will give the Zoom link to everyone and join for some conversation and “face time” with each other. Will it be chaotic? Maybe. But we will figure out a way to do it “decently and in order” as good Presbyterians do. Don't worry. Just join us at 11 a.m. on January 24th.



THANK YOU AERIEL!

With a very busy and growing family and many other responsibilities, Aerial Lewis has decided to resign as our IPC Youth Coordinator as of the end of 2020. For a year and a half, Aerial has shared her energy, her faith and a huge amount of love with our youth, and we thank her with cheers, hugs and our prayers. Thankfully, Aerial will still be active in and around IPC, and we look forward to new ways she will share her gifts. See page 5 for Aerial's heartfelt goodbye message.

Our Christian Education and Personnel Committee are currently looking at new ways to provide our youth with ministry. If you have ideas about how we might serve our young people, please contact our pastors or members of our Session.



Christ's Café

Christ's Café in 2021
Since last May, our
Christ's Café class has met
most Sunday mornings

at 9 a.m. on a Zoom video chat. We have explored the origins and current state of white supremacy in the United States and discovered ways that we can be an antiracist. Our conversations have been substantial, moving, and inspired. We're not finished in these conversations, and honestly, in regards to racism, we will probably never be finished.

I invite you to join us in this class. For 45 minutes each Sunday, we learn from each other and engage in some of the most insightful conversations I have ever had.

Take a leap of faith in the New Year and listen in. You will grow in faith and knowledge.

Bob

ANNUAL REPORTS

For Committee Chairs and other church leaders, please email your 2020 Annual Reports to Lori Chapman (lchapman@irvpresby.org) by January 24th.



A big thank you to all the IPCers who donated food, hats, gloves, mittens, funds, and time to the 2020 Westminster Neighborhood Ministries Christmas Basket Program!



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

Faith at Home boxes will continue for the foreseeable future until we are able to gather safely for children's classes. Feedback from parents will lead to some changes, though, with boxes being delivered slightly less frequently and lessons scaled back so that people don't feel as if they're falling behind. As always, the boxes are meant to have a "take what works for you & your family and leave the rest" approach. If your family has not been receiving the boxes and you would like to start, please email Carolyn at clesmeister@irvpresby.org.



DID YOU LOVE THE VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT?

We are working to create a photo book of the pictures and story so that it can become a family keepsake. Participating families will automatically be

updated about its progress, but if you did not participate and would like to receive a copy (or multiple copies) please email Carolyn at the address above. Thank you to all of the many participants who made the pageant possible!!

ENGAGING YOUNG ADULTS

The Engaging Young Adult team will be meeting via zoom on January 14th at 6:30. If you are interested in joining the team contact Rev. Wilson.

Tips and tricks for staying positive for a Covid negative winter.

Stay active:

Yes it's colder and the sun goes down before we're really even started out day but both our physical and mental health are improved by physical activity. That is different for everyone running, walking, stretching, whatever your ability be sure to stay active this winter.

Break the cycle of negative thinking:

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by negative thoughts or worry. We can drown in in the "what if's" inside our own heads. To break that cycle and give ourselves some relief will be important this winter. If you find yourself overly focused on a problem or worry, try to take a step back to decide if it's a solvable problem or if you're overthinking. Start with facts and move into problem solving one step at a time. It's important to get off the hamster wheel of anxiety whenever we can.

Set a new goal:

Weather is something you've always wanted to try or something completely out of your comfort zone learning to do something new is a great way to refocus energy on what we can control. Be it learning a new language, how to knit, picking up a musical instrument, goal motivated behavior keeps us moving forward while staying put!

Express yourself:

No man (or woman) is an island. We need connection in order to thrive. Find ways to call, zoom, have a social distance conversation about how your are feeling. Find someone who can listen and help process and move through how you are feeling. Isolation can make us sink in word and in winter the opportunities are minimized. So reach out when you need to and check in on those who you think may be in need of conversation and connection.

Cultivate optimism:

Don't focus on the optics of perfection. Pick out the positives of the situation, how you can make it better and jump into action. Not every DIY project is going to get you a show on HGTV and just because the first attempt at a new recipe didn't make you a MasterChef, you get all the point for doing it at all. Silence the inner critic and tap into the glass half full side then spread the attitude of optimism far and wide!

This Isn't Goodbye

If 2020 has taught me anything, it is life is, well, hard. There are so many things to juggle, even when you are tied to your home and have limited gatherings. For our little family, life hasn't been drastically different because of the pandemic. Neil and I are still able to work and the kids still attend childcare and pre-kindergarten. That doesn't mean there isn't added stress though.

I recently heard a quote about juggling all things in life. Author Nora Roberts said that the key to juggling is knowing that some of the balls in the air are plastic and some are glass. Moms sometimes have to drop the ball, and deciding which one can be the tricky part.

The glass balls for me are the health, safety, and well-being of my children, my husband, and myself. Another glass ball is the work I do for Roots and Wings Childcare, lesson planning and providing a safe and caring environment for the kids to feel cared for and to thrive. And yet another is my own mental health, being sure to attend therapy and to provide myself with self-care.

The plastic balls are also VERY important to my life, and sometimes I can manage to juggle both the glass and plastic, but sometimes I have to let these drop.

In recent months, the youth group has become a plastic ball for me. When I first started as youth director, the passion I felt was amazing. I could think of games or activities on the fly. I was so involved in the lives of each youth. I looked forward to each Sunday School lesson and each youth group meeting. Now I don't know if it is the pandemic or all the mental health work I have done this year or maybe a bit of both, but I have come to terms with the fact that I need to drop this ball.

This was no easy decision for me. It has been prayed over, talked through with my therapist, thought about during many sleepless nights, and contemplated with friends. The relationships I have built with the youth are something that I will cherish for all my days. The memories of playing the Grog, lock ins, laser tag, decorating cookies, game nights, and so many more will never go away. The youth have been such an inspiration to me, and I hope I have been to them too.

All this to say, I'm not saying goodbye. While I am stepping down as youth director, I am not saying goodbye to these youths. I will still be present in the church as a member of the congregation. I will still be supporting each of the youth through life. The relationships I have built with them will last a lifetime.

I think Neil said it best. He was a youth member when Craig and Kristin were youth directors, and he said "I still see Craig and Kristin all the time!" I hope I can be the Craig and Kristin for these youths. I hope they grow old in the church and still say hello to me on Sundays when they have families of their own.

Thank you to the youth for loving me and loving my kids. Thank you to the parents who made me feel valued and trusted through the pandemic. Thank you to the congregation for supporting the youth always.

Love and blessings to you all!



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Irvington Presbyterian Church

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JACK'S O R N E R

Jack Simpson, IPC member, explores the archives for stories of the church, its past members and other bits of interesting information and lore.

I received a Christmas card and it had a story printed on it that I did not know. On a clear winter evening in Austria, just before Christmas, a priest named Joseph Mohr was walking home after visiting a parishioner. Stopping on a hilltop overlooking his village, Father Mohr was overcome by the scene's beauty and stillness.

Inspired he began to write a poem, "Silent Night".

Christmas Eve 1818 was only days away when Father Mohr discovered that mice had

chewed through the bellows of the organ, and there would be no music for midnight mass. He went to the home of his musician friend Franz Gruber and asked Gruber if he might compose a melody to

accompany the poem. It was during that midnight mass in the village of Oberndorf that Franz Gruber played his guitar to the lyrics of a poem that would become one of the world's most beloved Christmas carols. Silent Night, Holy Night, All is calm, All is bright.

