



Celebrate!

A New Day – Our Continuing Story

This year our stewardship campaign has included the collecting and sharing of our member's stories. As part of our ongoing spiritual journey, and to help Pastor Molly learn who we are as individuals, we have shared our stories about why CCPC is special to us and why it is our spiritual home. The stories that follow have appeared in the weekly bulletin throughout the fall.

September 2009 from 4th Grade teacher, Linda Ertz...

Like many families, we started to look for a church family a few months after our first child, Charles, was born. Chris and I both came from faith-based families and wanted to find a new church home for ours. We were looking for a church with more than just a great Sunday Sermon; we wanted a congregation where both we and our children could grow.

I grew up going to two different church services each Sunday. In the morning, we went to an American Reformed Church service where I built my sense of friendships and community through a strong Sunday school and youth program. In the afternoon, the Korean Presbyterian Church was where I learned from leaders that helped me find my true faith in God. I knew I wanted my children to have a home where they could build both their social as well as spiritual identities.

When we came to Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church we knew that we found our new church. So many members here practice Presbyterian values in their daily lives by giving to others and volunteering with community organizations. We strongly believe in this congregation and its leadership. We feel so fortunate to have Charles and Harrison to be able to grow up with all of you!

October 2009 from Norm Stant...

The Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church became my spiritual home 54 years ago this month when my parents joined the church and brought a 9-year-old son to the 4th Grade Sunday School Class. Through Sunday School, Hearthstones, Firesides, and all of the singing choirs in the church, my Biblical knowledge flourished, my faith deepened, and my soul found its true home. The friendships I have made at Chevy Chase have lasted for years, and new friends have become some of my best friends.

During my years in high school and college, a kindly older gentleman by the name of Harold G. Sutton was Clerk of Session. In my mind, Mr. Sutton seemed to be Clerk forever. At the time, I thought—what an honor it is to serve in that position. During this time in the life of the church, being an Elder meant being an old man. I knew it would be many years before I could ever think of being asked to be an Elder. Very happily, things began to change: women were ordained (my own mother was only the sixth woman to be ordained at CCPC) and youth were elected.

In 1995 I was applying for the chairmanship of the English Department at the high school where I taught. At the same time, Art Sundstrom asked me to become Clerk of Session at Chevy Chase. My memory immediately went back to Mr. Sutton, and I realized that now the honor was coming to me. I did not get the department chairmanship, and although disappointed, I knew that God had better plans for me, and I fully understood that Psalm 84 is so very true: "For a day in your

courts is better than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God....”

Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church HAS, IS, and ALWAYS WILL BE – HOME!

October 18 from Sam and Lucy Kecker...

Arriving at my spiritual home came by way of a circuitous and uneven journey. I was the first son of a devout, fiercely believing immigrant family, born over 90 years ago in Colorado. I was baptized in the Greek Orthodox Church---the true and original faith that first brought the message of a new age and hope to the masses. My mother, Eleni, one of eight daughters of a village priest, inculcated in all her children the faith of her fathers. Underlying all my growing up years was an article of faith among all Greeks that along with introducing mankind to the Gospel two millennia ago, Greeks never let anyone forget they were directly descended from the likes of Socrates, Euripides, Homer, Plato, and Aristotle---and that Greeks introduced just about all the essential cultural elements of the Western World. I personally subscribed to this conviction. It has been with me all these years. One can't just ignore ancestors who retained their religion, their language, and their culture while surviving over 400 years of Ottoman occupation from the fall of Constantinople in 1493 to independence in 1825---a long stretch.

The beginning of a final spiritual home came when Lucy and I “compromised” and joined CCPC. We were welcomed warmly. I began to feel more comfortable with John Calvin. I liked Martin Luther's attitude. Early on I was asked to serve in some capacity that required a statement I was uncomfortable to make. The beloved senior minister, Dr. Hollister, gave me a tutorial I remember to this day. His wisdom, his kindness, his understanding assured me that uncertainty was part of the human condition. In the 50 years since, we lived through and in many overlapping circles---professional, neighbors, friends, community, politics. CCPC has been a special haven, the most inspiring circle for us.

Sam Kecker

I come from a long line of Presbyterians. My great-grandfather James Holmes was a Presbyterian missionary to the Indian tribes of Mississippi early in the 1800's. There he began raising a family, started a school, and expected long service. But President Andrew Jackson had other plans, implementing “The Trail of Tears” that sent the tribes west. The Holmes family, now without a mission, went north to Memphis. With help from the Hall family, just arrived from North Carolina, they established Mt. Carmel Church. Mt. Carmel Church has a noted history and in its graveyard are many Holmes, Halls, and a number of Indian friends who had accompanied them to Memphis.

CCPC became my spiritual home in 1953. My husband, Sam, had served in the Navy on minesweepers during WW2, and then was recalled during the Korean War. We were eager for some normalcy in our lives. Sam came from a Greek immigrant family, strongly Orthodox. While we each had strayed from church during college and war years, when we settled in Washington with our two young sons, we felt strongly that we wanted for them the treasured childhoods we had had, though both in different religions. Sam agreed to “go Presbyterian” with me, which I appreciated. I soon realized that the religions are not far apart in values, only in rituals. We have found CCPC a wonderful choice. We have joyfully worked in all aspects of church life, have suffered with staff and congregation through some difficult periods. The church has emerged stronger with God's grace. My hope for CCPC is that we remember its great history, its ability to test and accept the values derived from the changing centuries. As the country and our own local area finds greater diversity in its citizens, may we accept and respect other pathways to God, discovering our common values. Dr. Forrest Church, a fine young minister who died recently, said: “God is our name for that which

is greater than all and yet present in each.”

Lucy Kecker

October 25 from Charlotte Kettler...

(A part of the Faith Statement that she wrote as a member of the Confirmation Class in 2006.)

Who is Jesus Christ? What does being a Christian mean to me? What is the point of joining a congregation such as CCPC? These are just a few of the many questions I have been asking myself since I have decided to join the Confirmation Class of 2006. In my opinion faith is something personal and unique to everyone, and I feel blessed that God has given it to me.

First of all, I believe that Jesus Christ is the messiah, the Son of God. During his time on earth, he was truly God yet truly human. In his divine nature, he performed miracles and resurrected from the dead. In his human nature, he was a carpenter and had feelings just like you and me. The Bible even says that he cried when his friend Lazarus died. I also believe that Jesus was a teacher who taught us to love one another as God has loved us. He taught us that by his death, he saved the world. Most importantly, I believe that Jesus is a friend to all. When he lived in Palestine, he was friendly towards the outcasts such as the Samaritans, the sick, the sinners and the tax collectors. He forgives everyone and tries to lead sinners onto the right path once more.

Next, my Confirmation journey has led me to think about what being a Christian means to me. I have decided that with the gift of being a Christian comes many great responsibilities. It means that God has chosen me to be one of his disciples, a person who centers his or her life on God and who tries to spread the Gospel. As a Christian, I know the difference between right and wrong, so when I make a wrong choice I feel it is my responsibility to ask God for forgiveness. I also have to help out the world by doing community service such as feeding the homeless or doing yard work for a neighbor. I feel obligated to pray for others, especially for the terrorists and my enemies so that they may have a change of heart and learn to do the right things before they die.

Becoming a member of Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church is an exciting time in my life. It means a lot to me to become a member of this congregation because I want to be part of a Christian community in which I can share my beliefs openly and freely. I like being able to celebrate the Lord with others, and I like to actively participate in Church activities such as choir and youth group. I feel that the church congregation is now part of my family. I feel that I have people to turn to during hard or stressful times, and in return, it will be my responsibility to help other members when they go through rough times. I believe that our church is like a puzzle. All of the pieces represent all of the individuals within the congregation. Every piece is important, just as every member is important, and if one piece goes missing, then the puzzle cannot be completed. This symbolizes that if one person is “lost” and does not help out by donating time and/or money, the church cannot be complete and run properly.

On the whole, I am looking forward to becoming a member of this church. I feel ready to take on the challenges of my life because I know that the congregation will be there to give me support and help me through the bad times. I feel blessed to have faith and be one of God’s many disciples.

November 1, 2009 from Florence Mills...

One of the things that makes CCPC special to me is having known Ginny Spevak. I had seen her around for years, but really got to know her through the Needlework Group. When I joined, I didn't know how to knit very well--I could just barely do the two basic stitches, knit and purl. On my first project, a baby blanket, I got into lots of what I called knitting knots: stitches mysteriously disappeared, appeared, didn't look like the ones on either side of them, etc. Ginny had

warmly welcomed me to the group and assured me that everyone would help me learn to knit. Everyone helped, but I depended a lot on her. Since she encouraged me to come over to her house with my baffling knitting whenever I was stuck, I called her lots of times in between Needlework Group meetings to bail me out. It really helped my enthusiasm to get problems solved promptly and not to have to wait until the next meeting. Ginny just talked about how her mother had taught her to knit, quickly unraveling her mistakes, and getting her knitting fixed. She was passing this experience along to me and others in the group.

After a while my need for help dwindled, and I really liked the feeling of achievement in finishing good looking shawls. One of my early shawls was for a member of my extended family -- in September of 2007, we were told she had a very short time to live. I wanted to knit her a shawl and started knitting morning, noon, and night. I was slow and worried I couldn't get done in time. Then in early October, after knitting a couple weeks on the shawl, I went out of town for a long weekend--the shawl was about half-done. I asked if anyone could keep it moving towards completion while I was gone. Ginny volunteered immediately. When I came back that Tuesday, she had the shawl essentially finished. I couldn't believe it. She just said she had been knitting a long time, so she was fast and had had some down time that week which lent itself to knitting. I mailed the shawl, which was enjoyed for several months by the recipient.

At Needlework Group meetings we all talked and shared a lot about our lives. Ginny talked about renewable energy, her mother's decline in health, Mike's adventures as a bicyclist, and about her experiences as Ana's foster mother. She and Mike were aware they were living more dangerously after raising their own children. Ana came over to visit sometime in the summer of 2008--some things in her life were good, some weren't in Ginny's opinion. I was pretty preoccupied that fall of 2008 with a very difficult shawl which I took out, re-knit, counted stitches on. Ginny showed me how to make vertical repairs of mistakes, and by then, I was pretty independent in my struggles with the knitting knots. Eventually, I finished the shawl in mid-November.

At breakfast the Sunday before Thanksgiving 2008, my husband and I saw an article about a double murder on Belt Road. It was Ginny and Mike.

I think Ginny gave me and others a living example of faith, of being Christ on earth now by continuing his mission. Ginny wasn't perfect-- but she lived in a way which held up a sort of mirror clearly reflecting God's nature for all of us. I hope CCPC will be a gateway to all of us learning God's purpose and action in our lives. Ginny was an example of this walking among us.

November 8, 2009 from Mary Duncan Finch...

Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church is my spiritual home because ...

During the years our daughter came to CCPC's nursery school as a three and four year old, we felt very much at home here. Our daughter's teachers were very loving and nurturing. My family and my husband's family were life-long Methodists, but when our granddaughter came to the weekday nursery school a few years ago, we began to consider the possibility that CCPC might become a new spiritual home for us.

This is a story that illustrates how special CCPC is to me ...

As we began to visit and worship at CCPC, we heard Art Sundstrom's wonderful and inspiring sermons. We began to feel a sense of belonging and thought, perhaps this is it! I had taught in CCPC's nursery school for many years and knew parents who were members of the church. I had also come to know Ken Lowenberg and felt that I could become a part of CCPC's music ministry.

My greatest hope for the future of CCPC is ...

To provide a warm, inviting place for all people, regardless of age, race, nationality, income

or other differences to worship together, to find solace and to “recharge” our souls through sermons, music and fellowship.

November 15, 2009 by Dennis Wood...

Jesus came not only to save us, but also to create a community of believers to experience the Good News and share it with the world. My greatest hope for the future of CCPC is that it intensely and continuously strives to be that community.

What kind of church community are we? A discipleship church. Fishers of men and women. A people who possess the new reality. A loving people. A place where life and faith intersect.

How can we show forth God’s Kingdom at this intersection? We can encourage each other to have faith in God, and to turn “having and holding” into sharing, “climbing” into equality, and “commanding” into service. We can offer love and hospitality to all. We can call forth Jesus’ presence, and love, and power to uproot disease, fragmentation, and selfishness, and bring about wholeness and abundant life. Together we can challenge the principalities and powers of the world.

A community, of course, is much more than a group of individuals. Togetherness becomes important. We can spend time together, know each other, and pray together. We can also work, share, contemplate, confront, and uphold together, perhaps in small groups. In the parlance of some, we can work toward being accountable to each other on our inward and outward journeys—into our spiritual life and out to our world.

So, what is my greatest hope for CCPC in the future? A community where the Kingdom of God is clearly unfolding. A community that is salt to the world and a beacon to those being drawn by Christ’s call.

November 22, 2009 by Connie Rhind Robey...

I believe that God is a gentle physical presence that surrounds us all the time. There are times when God’s presence can be felt powerfully and other times when it is harder to feel. In all of these times, God’s presence exists to all who are open to receiving it. I cannot point to any path that brought me directly to this belief. I have felt God and God’s presence in my own life—stronger at some times than at other times.

I believe that the Church is a way for people to come together to celebrate God, to worship together, and to be in a community of believers. The Church also provides a place where people can learn about their faith together. A natural extension of these aspects of the Church is that the Church becomes a community of friends and family who are there for each other, in large ways and in small ways.

A bit of history on how I came to my beliefs. My paternal Grandfather was a Presbyterian Minister and my father and maternal Grandmother were elders at 4th Presbyterian Church in Chicago and Winnetka Presbyterian Church so the Church was always a religious and structural presence in our lives. I attended every week and taught Sunday school while I was in High School. In college I took “The New Testament” to learn about the Bible in an historical and religious context. Seven years ago when I was looking for a Church to join, I turned to CCPC, where I had attended periodically for 10 years. I found a warm and welcoming Church. I took Art’s class on “Basics” to ensure that I agreed with Presbyterians on fundamental religious points and that it wasn’t just that I was comfortable with the liturgy and order of service. I share these points of my religious history to say that I have thought about God, the Scriptures and the Church quite specifically and from different perspectives over my life.

CCPC is a special community for me. I have appreciated serving the Church as an Elder the

past 2+ years, first on the CE committee and then on Stewardship. This opportunity has made me feel strongly connected to the church and others in the church.

When I first joined CCPC Linton Wray asked me to serve on a sub-committee with him. Our role was to look at the experience of visitors worshipping at CCPC. Asking me to serve was such a welcoming gesture. I got to know Linton, Roy Cashion, Greg Fudge, and Ron Wick through it and began to know people on Sundays. I typically attended the 11 service (I liked the later time and the more traditional service) until I had a child who I wanted to enroll in Sunday school.

When our son Tom was born, two members of CCPC called to see if they could bring food. I hadn't known either of them before and found it just lovely. Rebecca Iverson-Hunter was part of the Mom's group that I then joined. Sherburne Laughlin brought dinner and several practical things to lend us for a baby. It was such a gracious gesture from people we didn't know at the time. My husband, Rick, belongs to a different church in the area and was also made to feel very welcome by them.

December 6, 2009 by Priscilla Bacon Rawlins...

CCPC has always been a part of my life.

As a child, youth and young adult I was active with the church, attended and then taught Sunday School, attended and then chaperoned youth group trips. Once I was in my 20's I even started making monetary donations after getting a stewardship call from a former youth group leader. I gave back to CCPC in every way I could, but have always felt I got so much more in return: faith, friends and a support system.

Now I have a few new roles that demand my attention, wife and mother, but I still volunteer and give as much as I can. My life has changed a lot because of these new roles and today my prayers are different. Each Sunday in church I ask God for the strength to be a loving and understanding partner to my husband and to grant me the patience being a parent requires. In exchange for my prayers I found new friends.

I saw my grandmother and mother with great friends and support systems at the church; mine disappeared when we all went off to college and most never returned to DC and CCPC. For a long time I felt out of place at CCPC, in a limbo of sorts, I wondered if I should move on too, but no place else felt like home and gave me the feeling of being centered. Then one day I got an invitation in the mail to a "Families with Young Children" event and I told my husband I thought we should go and we had fun! A few of the moms and I stayed in touch and they asked me about a year later to dinner and I started having dinner with them regularly. I think they are some of the kindest and funniest people I know, and guess what – they have problems too. We're all in this crazy thing called parenting together and somehow that makes everything ok. The community at CCPC has given this amazing gift to me. The ability to just be ok with the way things are, to try to be better, but to accept that I don't have 100% control and that parenthood isn't perfect.

I have broadened my circle even further since joining this group. When my family and I took turns over six months being on the "concerns" list it really felt like the whole congregation was there for me, even people I didn't know reached out. Beyond the casseroles, the cards and calls made me feel like people were thinking of me and I knew that we were going to be ok. With all those prayers how could we not be? I felt a little guilty with them "wasting" their prayers on me when there were usually much sicker folks than me, my husband or my kids. But I decided I would accept it. It felt good that this congregation cared about me, and even more than that, about my kids and husband.

The greatest gift my family and I have gotten from our membership here is knowing that we don't face our problems alone, God and his people are with us. To me that has repaid my

contributions tenfold.

December 13, 2009 by Fred Schafrick...

I grew up in a Presbyterian Church in Michigan, but had drifted away from the Church as I went off to college and then to work in New York and D.C. I began, however, to feel a call to come back to church, and I began attending services Presbyterian services in Washington at other churches. I started attending CCPC in 1981, after my wife, Sharon Halpin (a member of Blessed Sacrament), and I purchased a home in Chevy Chase, D.C.

After joining CCPC in 1982, I gradually got involved in church activities. I volunteered to join a newly organized usher group. Sharon and I also participated in a Kerygma bible study group led by Bob Curry (then a parish associate). Eventually, I was elected to serve as a deacon, and then an elder. Thereafter, I have been privileged to serve additional terms as a deacon and an elder, as well as a term as auditor and as a member of the congregational nominating committee. I have also served on several committees, most recently, the stewardship committee.

My memories at CCPC include watching my sons Michael and Nathaniel (“Nate”), go through to Sunday school at CCPC and became members here. I remember the youth Sundays where Michael was one of the speakers. I also have fond memories of the many faithful members whom I have met here, some of whom are sadly no long with us.

For me, CCPC has been a congregation where persons from various backgrounds and differing theological and political views have been able to worship and work together. It has been gratifying to see the new members who have joined the Church in recent years and to see all the young children come forward during time with children.

My hope for CCPC is that we continue to grow, not just in numbers, but spiritually as we seek to be better disciples of Christ. That includes increased giving for the Church’s mission and programs, for CCPC’s programs and missions need our generous tithes and offerings. After all, how we spend our money, the results of our daily labors, is a statement of what is truly important in our lives.