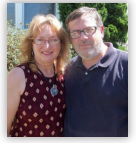




Christ Presbyterian Church in The Hill

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“I have no idea what I’m supposed to do. I only know what I can do.”

~Young Captain James T. Kirk, Star Trek, Into the Darkness, the movie

“Go to the sound of the guns, go to the sound of need, and trust God to show you how to help.”

~David Eubank, founder of “Free Burma Rangers”

March 26, 2024

Dear Partners and Co-workers in God’s field,

As the cold and sometimes freezing weather set in over the winter, CPC in The Hill continued to reach out, preach and demonstrate the gospel, and minister the love of Christ—*outdoors!* We take the love of Jesus to the people. In this Hill newsletter update, I would like to highlight three of our year-round, outdoor ministries: *the Saturday Sidewalk Breakfast & Church, Coffee & Conversations, and Maxine’s Kids Read Out Loud.*

Saturday Sidewalk Breakfast & Church

Every Saturday from 10am to 11am outside on the sidewalk in front of our Hill apartment, we serve a hot breakfast, along with bananas, oranges, apples, yogurt, breakfast bars, and OJ and freshly ground coffee. We do this rain or shine, in the snow, the freezing cold and wind (which is harder than you think to do). We started this September 2019. The Breakfast has grown from an average of 18 to, now, 35, sometimes 40+, each Saturday. Usually, all the food is gone in 40 to 45 minutes.

We began the sidewalk church service on the Saturday of Easter weekend 2020—yes, during the COVID-19 lockdown. Pretty sure our service was the only in-person Easter Service, at least, in Connecticut—probably almost anywhere. We had 18 people at that first service. With few exceptions, we have had the sidewalk church service, along with the Breakfast, every Saturday since, even in the rain and a few blizzards and hailstorms.

During COVID-19’s initial months, many of the sites where food typically is available for the poor and homeless had closed down; but we stayed serving, nonetheless. In fact, our local alderman and, even, the mayor asked us to keep serving. We were glad to. Also, during this time, local schools were drop-off sites for food and groceries so parents could get food for their families. One vice principal, a sister-in-the-Lord from our anchor church, asked if we’d pick up the leftover food, so we could distribute to those who came to the sidewalk breakfast. And, of course, we did. Gladly. This led Lisa, my wife, to connect with one of the food rescue folks—and our sidewalk breakfast became a weekly food rescue drop off. So along with the breakfast, we also have been distributing bread and other grocery items to those who come on Saturday. We also provide toilet paper, tissues, soap, socks, winter hats and gloves, hand-sewn quilts, ballcaps (during the summer), water, and sometimes clothing.

One of the reasons we do the breakfast each week—*no matter the weather*—is to gain the people’s trust—trust, if they walk a block or two (sometimes even further), especially in inclement weather, there will be something for them to eat. The other reason, it’s *not* a program; it is part of the life of our church—something we can do to demonstrate the love of Jesus intentionally and concretely and show that the Kingdom of God has appeared.

The sidewalk church: We began the sidewalk church service—not just me preaching, but a full liturgical service (except communion at this point). We even have a time of confession for sins. Literally we brought church to people who’d probably never go to church. This service is, as it were, our second CPC in The Hill campus. We have regulars, sometimers, and new guests every week—some pleasantly surprised that the breakfast includes a church service. We average about 15 folks. Sometimes we’ll see 25 for the service (as we have been recently), which is at the beginning of the breakfast.

The service itself is only 10, maybe 15 minutes—with a Call to Worship, a Time for Confessing Sins, a Sermon (usually the same text I’m doing at Sunday church), a time of Community Prayers, and a Benediction. We wanted to do a full church service to demonstrate God shows up even on a sidewalk and makes it his Throneroom. As I explain to those present, the Call to Worship is God’s invitation to come before Him—He has invited them (even if they were just passing by and stopped because we had something to eat). All are welcome!

The weekly average cost for the breakfast is \$65, just for the regular, weekly food supplies. This doesn’t include the other needed supplies, which I usually purchase in bulk—hot & cold cups, food containers, sporks, soap, tissues, toilet paper, takeout food containers, coffee & OJ, thank you food bags, oatmeal (50lb bags!), etc. *Your financial partnership with us enables us to do this: to reach people mostly overlooked, forgotten, and most likely would never attend a church—and those who do not have regular contact with a pastor.*

Coffee & Conversations

After 3 and a half years of doing the sidewalk church, more and more of the folks wanted to talk to me about their lives and their problems, even sometimes about their sin. It is very hard to make appointments for this demographic, so back in July 2023 I decided to create a regular (outdoor) space and time for folks to know I'd be there—*again, no matter the weather*—with some coffee, some pastries, and a time to meet with the pastor.

An average of 18 folks, sometimes as many as 25, stop by each week. While this is also a time for street folks to get to know the pastor and I them, the hope is that some meaningful conversations would happen. And they have. Many times. These folks, for the most part, don't know a pastor nor do their everyday or weekly lives bring them into contact with one. *Coffee & Conversations* creates a space for this to happen, allowing me to do some pastoral counseling or just give advice. Depending on where someone is spiritually, this time also gives me space to disciple. The fact that they are getting to know me as their pastor, for many of these folks, I am in a place where I can be frank and direct about their lives and the problems they want to talk about.

If it takes making coffee and buying some pastries (or serving breakfast) each week to build relationships as a pastor with these folk, who most likely don't know a pastor and are forgotten by most (even Christians), then, coffee and pastries (and oatmeal) it is! Cold. Rain. Sun. If it takes food to reach and win these folks, I'd gladly give my paycheck (with some help from my friends, too). *Your support and financial partnership enables Lisa and I to live among these folks here in the Hill, which gives us the opportunity to be the gospel and a pastor to them.*

Kids Read Out Loud

Each Saturday afternoon, Maxine, our administrative assistant, gathers children together for a time of reading and prayer. She hosts this time in her Hill apartment's yard. And the kids come. She has been doing this since the COVID-19 lockdown and all the kids were unable to attend school. Each Saturday the kids of all ages, some teenagers, too, would gather to listen to someone read a chapter book. Afterward they're asked age-appropriate reading comprehension questions. The kids loved it—and still do. At the time they were starving for school-learning and came without fail each week. The kids still continue to come—they love learning. Maxine also incorporated a time of prayer—each child gives a prayer request and someone prays. Maxine, this past winter, partnered with our nearby Hill Library to host on freezing cold Saturday afternoons. During the Summer we add reading a Bible Story (along with age-appropriate reading comprehension questions) and a craft time based on the Bible Story. *Your support enables us to provide this time with the kids, along with the books and supplies needed.*

Just like young Captain Kirk quoted above, I don't always know what I am supposed to do, but I do know what I can do. And these outdoor ministries are what we can do. Your support and prayers enable and empower Lisa and me (and CPC in The Hill) to hear the sounds of the battle and run to the sound of need, trusting God to show us how we can help, and praying that God will be showing us how we (and you) can help.

The work that we do must be a long term, consistent ministry. And because of your support and prayers, we are seeing God work in the lives of our most vulnerable Hill neighbors. You enable us to grow our church and see 35 to 40 folks each Saturday outside our apartment on the Sidewalk; 18 to 25 folks who stop by for some coffee and a conversation with the pastor each Wednesday; and on Saturdays, 10 to 12 children at Maxine's for reading out loud and some prayer. The CPC in The Hill outdoor ministries are strategic, long-term commitments to reach Hill neighbors with the gospel . . . to increase the church . . . see lives change . . . that's why we need your support . . .

This year has been our toughest year financially. Not only did I have to trim \$11,000 off our FY24 ministry budget, I had to increase the fundraising Lisa and I are responsible for by \$8,000. The goal this year (FY24) is \$58,000. Currently we are at 80%, leaving 20% (or \$11,600) to be raised in this latter half of our ministry and budget year (Sep-Aug).

Thank you for your prayers and support . . . and for being co-workers with us in God's field.

Your co-workers in God's field,

Pastor Chip & Lisa Anderson

Ways to donate—monthly payments or as one-time annual sum

- **Check or e-check:** CPC New Haven; mark for Hill/CA; mail: CPC New Haven, 135 Whitney Ave, New Haven, CT 06510
- **Online** at CPCintheHill.org > Donate > Donation Applied > **“Hill Church Planter–Rev. Chip Anderson”**
- Anyone who already gives online, please check to make sure your credit card info is up-to-date—thank you.



Wednesday Coffee & Conversations, a space for Hill folks to spend time with a pastor; using this time and space for some good conversations, which happen every Wednesday—and prayers with folks, too.



Our 5th annual Sidewalk Thanksgiving—served over 35 folks a thanksgiving meal with all the trimmings.



The annual Hill Christmas Store and our crew of servants—this store provides new items for Children at 85% off. This provides an affordable opportunity to buy their kids and grand-babies a few items that still cost them something—skin in the game as it were. This is not a toy giveaway.

We are so grateful for everyone who partners with us to make these ministries happen each week. Continue to pray that God uses us to minister to our Hill neighbors so that they would be drawn to follow Jesus. Thank-you.



Kids Christmas Eve—presents, a campfire, and they still listened to a chapter and asked reading comprehension questions.



Advent Christmas Candle Lighting (Lisa & Juan) and a winter Bowling field trip for our Read Out Loud Kids.



Back in the Fall at our Final Movie Night of the Season, we had a Halloween Harvest Night for the Kids.



On Christmas morning this year, Lisa and I (and my Mom, too) had breakfast and some presents for those walking the streets. We wanted to give them some Christmas. Mom made stockings for everyone. She said, “*Everyone deserves a Christmas stocking on Christmas.*”



The food rescue, as well, comes no matter the weather. I am thankful for our volunteers that help distribute the food rescue. Silas from our Sunday congregation regularly serves; and, one of our regular Saturday Sidewalk church men also serves his neighbors.



- A night of snow doesn't stop folks from gather Saturday morning for church and some breakfast. This is sidewalk church—you can't see me, but I am leading the Sidewalk Service just outside the camera.
- This gentleman was a first timer, but as you can tell, he is more than happy to hold our Call to Worship this morning at the sidewalk service.
- I am so happy and encouraged by our Saturday Sidewalk team and volunteers.

We seek to change lives. We cannot do what is ordinarily done—I know, sounds cliché, but we need to think out of the box, “non-ordinarily.” And your support enables us to do what is needed here to reach Hill folks with the gospel. Thank-you.



One of the reasons I do open air preaching: it is the more likely way of reaching men—seems to be working here on Saturdays. Most of the 35-40 who come are men.



Kids often come to our Saturday Sidewalk Breakfast & Church. In fact, kids love to hold our Call to Worship. This is such an opportunity for reaching Hill children—we're praying someone steps up to start a kids Saturday Sidewalk Ministry—a Sidewalk Church "Sunday School" if you will. Will you pray God brings this to pass?



The men, quicky, volunteer to unload the Food Rescue SUV when it comes. I also use Saturdays as discipleship time for our CPC in The Hill men (pictured here is Juan and Jerry—Silas is above serving at the Food Rescue table). They learn to serve and they hear the Word preaching at the sidewalk church service. Yes, this is discipleship!



The gentleman in the orange jacket is a regular—a Christian man, who, with his wife, regularly attends our Sidewalk Church—they consider it their church.



One of our wonderful supporters makes hand-made blankets for our Wednesday & Saturday guests.