

news from the EDGE



First Presbyterian Church of
EDGEWOOD
The Community Church

Believing we are called together
by God's love through Jesus Christ, our mission as
the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood is to
love God, to love each other and to love our neighbors.

The monthly newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood

December 2016

PASTOR'S

POINT OF VIEW



Michael P. Rucker

ADVENT – A New Beginning

I am always humbled by the brothers and sisters who take time each day to “do their devotions.” My mother led her five children in devotions many mornings before we walked up the hill to Belle Stone Elementary School. I was not impressed with her commitment until I got older. Mom, in her quiet steadfastness, introduced her children to an important spiritual discipline. We were Methodists, so Mom turned to *The Upper Room* for inspiration.

Over the years, I have explored a wide variety of resources to start my day on the right foot.

One evening, as I browsed through the devotional literature shelf at Barnes and Noble, I picked up a piece that intrigued me - *One Hundred Blessings Every Day: Exercises for Personal Growth and Renewal Reflecting the Seasons of the Jewish Year*. I like it. Not only do I gain understanding of the unique Jewish calendar, but I am inspired by reflections of our Jewish brethren. And Jesus was born, raised, and died a Jew.

The autumn season here in the United States corresponds to the Jewish month called *Tishrei*, which means “to begin.” The first day of the month of *Tishrei* is Rosh-Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. It stirs my soul to think that Jesus celebrated these holy days as he grew up. Our Advent (synonyms would be arrival, emergence, dawn, birth, rise) has much in common with the Jewish New Year.

(cont'd. p.2)

DECEMBER 2016 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

DECEMBER 4

We will celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper on this 2nd Sunday of Advent. And we will recall the words of the “truth-teller. A man known as John the Baptist. See Matthew 3: 1-12 to prepare yourselves to “hear the voice of the one crying in the wilderness.”

DECEMBER 11

You are invited to take part in one of the more reflective services of the year. The meditative music of Taize will set the tone. Prophetic passages from the Book of Isaiah will open us to hear God's word. Those of us who are feeling loss in the midst of a season full of hype and joyful noise will have time to share our sadness with the community and the Lord.

DECEMBER 18

The North Hills Choir directed by Shaun Cloonan will assist in worship leadership on this Sunday service of “Lessons and Carols.”



Christmas Eve
CANDLELIGHT
SERVICE

Christmas Eve Service
December 24 @ 8:00PM

“For unto us a child is born, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

We will sing songs of joy and celebrate a holy communion. Please bring your family and friends and worship with us.

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News from the Edge is the monthly newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood. If you have information you would like to include in the next issue, email Judy Mysels at office@fpcedgewood.org by the 15th of the prior month. Sponsorship is available for \$40 per month.

Pastor's Point of View (cont'd.)

The Jewish symbol for the month of *Tishrei* is a scale. A scale represents the idea of balance. This image caused me to reflect. As we wend our way through the years we are given, it is remarkably, predictably true that our lives become unbalanced. Too many demands. Too much to do. Too much information. Too many temptations. Too many lies. Too much "this world" and not enough of "God's world."

Advent is a time for us to step back, step away from the scary, divisive times we are in and check out our balance. I won't speak for you, but my life is often out of balance. Advent is a time for me to rediscover that for every mistake I make, there is mercy. For every sin I commit, there is forgiveness. For every despairing thought, there is the grace of a long-suffering and everlastingly loving God. Advent is the time to find my balance, to repent, to turn toward God.

As one ancient Jewish Rabbi named Vilna put it, *"Each day should be a new experience. Each day we have the opportunity of a fresh start. Each person who repents is like a newborn child."* Or, as another ancient Jewish prophet put it, **"Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."**

May the peace of Christ which surpasses all understanding be with you.
Pastor Michael

December Worship Schedule (cont'd.)

DECEMBER 25

Jesus Christ is born! And yes, it is one of those years Sunday morning worship falls smack dab in the middle of our Christmas morning. We will have a worship service. It will be upbeat, casual, and a bit shorter than usual.

Coming Up in January ☐☐

JANUARY 1

Happy New Year! See Christmas morning's notes. I am planning the same sort of worship experience. The service will be celebratory, casual. We will remember those days when Joseph, Mary, and the infant Jesus fled as refugees into the land of Egypt in order to escape the persecution of King Herod. See Matthew 2: 13-23.

JANUARY 8

When he was an infant, Jesus was visited by mysterious worshipers from the east, the 3 Magi. We will read about their brief, meaningful visit in Mathew 2: 1-12. Holy Communion will be served.

"Un-Hanging of the Greens"

Immediately following worship on **Sunday, January 8**, we will need a crew of worker bees to help us take down the Christmas decorations as we move into the next season of the Church year. Those who helped to hang last month found it very helpful that everything was neatly boxed with photos showing where the decorations went. Let's make next year just as easy by working together to put it all away!



Project Manger Tree

The Board of Deacons will be working with Action Housing Homeless Service again this year. We have had an overwhelming response from the congregation in the past and would like to continue this wonderful project.

Please select a tag from the tree and buy an age-appropriate gift. Money can also be donated to buy wrapping paper, gift bags and ribbon. See any Deacon for more information about the project, for help in selecting a manger tree tag and for gift ideas. Please sponsor one of God's children.

We would like your UNWRAPPED gifts along with the tag returned to the church **by Dec 11**. Thank you for your support of this project.

God Bless, *The Board of Deacons*



Daily Advent Devotions

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary will offer daily Advent devotionals in a variety of formats:

Online at www.pts.edu/devotional

Receive **daily emails**: go to www.pts.edu/email. Complete info and click "Devotionals (Advent and Lent)."

Download free **Android or Apple App**: visit the store and search for "Devotions—Advent & Lent."

Request a **printed copy**: call 412-362-5610 or email reception@pts.edu

Make this Advent a time of Active Waiting for the arrival of the Christ Child!

Congregational Meeting Sunday, Dec. 11

This serves as official notice that we will conduct a congregational meeting immediately after worship on **Sunday, December 11**. At this meeting you'll get a chance to see and comment on the **2017 budget** before it is formally adopted by the session.

We also will elect officers to the class of 2017, allowing new officers to attend their January meetings, and then they'll be installed at a later date.

The Session values your input and seeks to be responsible stewards of your money. Copies of the proposed budget will be available at least one week prior to the meeting. **Please make every effort to attend this meeting.**

Call for 2015 Reports

On Sunday, **January 29** immediately following worship, the Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held to receive the approved 2017 budget and ministry team reports.

If you are the staff member, chair or secretary of a ministry team or organization within the church, please have your narrative report into the church office by **January 22**. It can be given in hard copy or e-mailed to Judy at office@fpcedgewood.org.

RENOVATION UPDATE

The Renovation Fundraising Team (Amy Moore, Gregg Baldwin, Paul Ohori, Rhonda Apossos, Tom Ochs, Tyler McGuigan, and Pastor Michael) is developing a fundraising strategy that will be implemented in January. But all of you should know that funds are being accepted for the renovation as of now. If you would like to begin donating before the end of 2016, please send in your donation—CLEARLY MARKED—"Renovation Fund." Thank you.

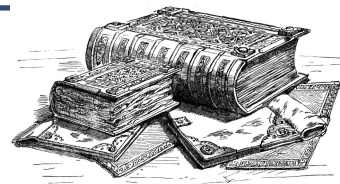
Some Thoughts to Guide Your Advent

“Jesus came to us as a small child so that we might come to understand not only that nothing we do is insignificant, but that every small thing we do has within it the power to change the world.”

Joan Chittister, OSB

“You could more easily catch a hurricane in a shrimp net than you can understand the wild, relentless, passionate, uncompromising, pursuing love of God made present in the manger.” *Brennan Manning*

“Mahatma Gandhi once said, ‘There is more to life than merely increasing its speed.’ May our slowing down this Advent be our gentle protest against the violence of our rushing world. May our slowing down give quiet, steady witness to the values of attentiveness, carefulness, patience, receptivity, stillness. May our slowing down enable us to make real and meaningful connections with people, nature, work, art and (most importantly) with God.” *Melannie Svoboda, SND*



Calling all History Buffs!

We are forming a historical society and welcome anyone who is interested. Inaugural meeting will be held after worship on 12/4.

SUPPORT THE MINISTRY AND MISSION OF FPCE

In mid-November Pastor Michael mailed a letter to all members and friends of FPCE. The letter asked you to make a financial commitment to support the on-going ministry and mission of FPCE for 2017. If you are able to do so, it is much appreciated. Please return that commitment form to the church by December 4. You may put it in the offering plate on Sunday morning or mail it to the church.

THANK YOU.

Sunday Mornings

- Children’s Sunday School meets during worship.
- The Adult Class is studying the "Tour of the Bible" with Song of Solomon at 9:45 in the Lounge.

Men’s Group

The Men's Group will meet at its usual day and time, which is 2nd and 4th Mondays at 7:00 PM at Foli's Place, 1050 Brinton Rd, (next to the CoGo's).

Tuesday Morning Book Club

The Jesus I Never Knew by renowned author Philip Yancey lives up to its title. This book opens our eyes up to the world in which Jesus lived and moved and had his being. We will uncover new insights in the life and death of the Risen Lord. This group meets Tuesday mornings at 10:00AM at Rhonda Apossos' home (361 Maple Ave.)

BLOCKS (Believing Little Ones Can Know and Serve)

provides a fun and casual setting for our youngest friends to learn and play. Each session, we focus on a different word (or “building block”). This December – no surprise here – we’re talking about Jesus! Please join us for this special Christmas-themed edition of BLOCKS. We will sing (and dance and jump) our way through the Christmas story. A small craft and playtime will follow the lesson. Youthful energy and exuberance is most welcome as we celebrate the new life, new hope, and new joy the wonderful Child brings. Please spread the word to your friends, family, and neighbors to join us on **Tuesday, Dec. 6th, at 6:30 in the nursery**. Caregivers should attend with children (program is geared for kids ages toddler to kindergarten).

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Pastor Michael will be leading classes during the season of Advent. Let us wait and prepare for God’s incarnation together. Join us on Wednesday evenings through the Advent season 7:00 p.m. in the Lounge.

CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION

"It's the most wonderful time of the year..."

One could also make the argument that it's the most stressful, or most busy, or most commercialized, or, or, or... In the world of the musician, it is definitely a crazy time. I'll be traveling all over the north hills with my singers performing for senior citizen holiday parties, visiting the residents of homes, spreading holiday cheer through music and bright, smiling faces. And of course, there are the holiday gatherings, shopping trips, visits from friends and family, and more.

We in the church know, however, that it isn't about "parties for hosting, marshmallows for toasting, and caroling out in the snow." No, we're in the midst of proclaiming "Happy New Year" to our Christian brothers and sisters as we journey through the beginning of a new church year with the season of hope and anticipation, Advent. And while we pause to reflect on the wonder of the Savior of the world, we will of course share in some festive activities and songs together.

We'll set aside some space through the power of meditative song during our Taizé/Iona-filled Blue Christmas service on December 11, acknowledging that the holidays aren't always the brightest spots in everyone's lives. We'll remember all of the wonderful

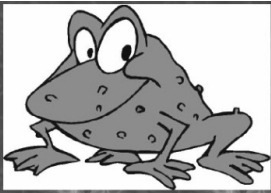
MUSIC Ministry

stories and songs that tell the greatest story ever told on December 18 with a service of Lessons & Carols, welcoming

back my high school group, the North Hills Singers (who will perform their holiday set immediately following the service). And, we'll share in that most glorious service of remembrance, the Christmas Eve candlelight and communion service on December 24. Lots of musical moments in a variety of styles to help you fully appreciate what Advent has to offer.

A quick thank-you to those who attended and assisted with the Women's Choral Festival several weeks ago. We had another afternoon of beautiful song as five different women's choirs shared their talents with a pretty full sanctuary. Special shout out to Pastor Michael who served as traffic cop, directing cars to the School for the Deaf parking lot. It's always great to see our sanctuary on display. We often take for granted the beauty of the woodwork and windows each week, and inevitably I hear compliments from visitors about the place we call our church home.

May your Advent and Christmas seasons be filled with abundant blessings. It truly is the most wonderful time of the year!



F.R.O.G.S. AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (FRIENDS, READING, & OTHER GREAT STUFF)

November was a short, but busy month for FROGS. We made Thanksgiving crafts to be included in Deacon baskets, took our last field trip to Koenig Field to play outside. Will reconvene after the holiday to meet again in December for another short month, meeting only 6 times. We are having a great time working one on one with each FROG during homework time.

Huge thanks for the donations of snacks and drinks from the wonderful FPCE family.

Snacks are still needed: fruit snacks, crackers, chips, cookies, and/or drinks: Capri Sun, juice, etc.

Judy Mysels, Director

News of Our Members and Friends

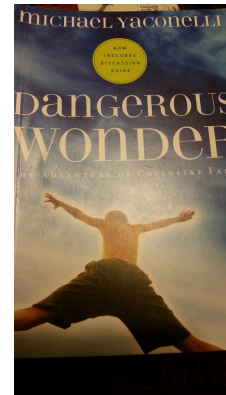
- ◆ We rejoiced with the family of **Haley Hartman**, who was baptized during worship on November 6.
- Thanks to **Shaun** and his team on a successful choral festival on November 13 in our sanctuary.
- ◆ Many thanks to **Mary Ann Hartman and her sisters** for cleaning out the Heritage Room. Great work!
- ◆ **Shadyside Academy** brought in over 3,800 canned goods to replenish our Food Pantry and other pantries in the area.
- ◆ Our **FROGS kids** sorted the pantry goods that were brought in from the Shadyside Academy annual food drive.
- ◆ Thanks to the **Anniversary Committee** for making the Nov. 20th celebration such a great event.
- Thank you to all who stayed after worship on November 27 to decorate the sanctuary so beautifully for the Advent and Christmas season.
- During this holiday season, please remember the people from your families, our church family, and our community who are feeling lonely and distant from the joy and laughter of the season.



THE BOOK CORNER

In this season that is made so much more meaningful by the presence of children, a great book to enjoy is Michael Yaconelli's *Dangerous Wonder*. His wish for the reader is this:

"My prayer is *not* that you will finish reading this book with a great new intellectual understanding of the Christian faith; but rather, that somewhere in your reading you will hear the whisper of Jesus. And that somewhere in the pages of this book, you will feel stirring within you those childlike attributes of passion, curiosity, abandon, and wonder that are the source of Life itself. May the fire of Jesus' presence once again fill your every waking moment with passion and adventure!"



PROGRAM
 Magnificat in D (featuring the Renaissance City Choir) **BACH**
 Noel from Symphonic Sketches **CHADWICK**
 Prayer of Saint Gregory **HOVHANESS**
 March of the Toys from Babes in Toyland **HERBERT**
 White Christmas **BERLIN**
 The Nutcracker Suite **ELLINGTON/STRAYHORN**
 A Christmas Festival **ANDERSON**
 Sleigh Ride **ANDERSON**

PERFORMANCE LOCATION
 First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood
 120 E Swissvale Ave
 Pittsburgh, PA, 15218

GET TICKETS!
 General Admission: \$15
 Seniors and Students: \$10

At the door or online at edgewoodsymphony.org
 Group discounts are available for parties of eight or more. Call 412-473-8880 for details and accessibility information.

OUR 125TH ANNIVERSARY

"A Day to Rejoice and Be Glad!"

On the morning of Sunday, November 20, this fellowship celebrated its 125th anniversary during the morning worship service and the luncheon that followed immediately afterwards. If you were not able to be with us in body, I know you were with us in spirit. "Twas a lovely morning!"

During the worship service, Shaun, Sunny, and the Sanctuary Choir sang the upbeat anthem, "Keep Your Lamps!" The Reverend Dr. Beverly James delivered a greeting and congratulations from Pittsburgh Presbytery. Pastor Rucker read the names of our brothers and sisters who have been members for 25 and 50 years.

After worship, Shaun gave a tour of our lovely and spirit-filled sanctuary, pointing out the rich symbolism that surrounds us every Sunday morning. Memorabilia, photos, bulletins, letters, and more were

on display in the lounge. Before we enjoyed our meal, Pastor Rucker read letters of love and thankfulness from previous pastors, Doug Stevens and Walter Pietschman. Reverend Mike Wilson sent a video of greetings and gave us insight into the church he serves currently. Florence Pickels shared memories of FPCE before many of us were around. After an enthusiastic rendition of "Happy Birthday," ninety plus people enjoyed a delicious meal, warm conversation, and a visual presentation Shaun Cloonan put together that took many people back to their "younger" days. People went home with their spirits, stomachs, and memories full of warmth and love.



DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
		10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 6:30 BLOCKS 7:00 Deacons 7:00 AA	7:00 pm: Advent class in lounge	3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	12-3PM PW Christmas Party 7:30 ESO Holiday Concert
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9:30 Choir Reh. 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship Planning Mtg. Historical Society	7:00 Scouts	10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 Session 7:00 AA	7:00 pm. Advent class in lounge	1:00 Daytime Circle 3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	8:30 AA
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9:30 Choir Reh. 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship Congregational Meeting	7:00 Men's Group (Foli's) 7:00 Scouts	10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA	7:00 pm. Advent class in lounge	3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	1-3PM Koenig Jennings Gathering (GP) 8:30 AA
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9:30 Choir Reh. 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	7:00 Scouts	10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA	7:00 pm. Advent class in lounge.	NO FROGS	8:00 AA	8:00 Christmas Eve Service
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
9:30 Choir Reh. 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	7:00 Men's Group (Foli's) 7:00 Scouts	NO FROGS 7:00 AA		NO FROGS		



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CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Poinsettia plants may be contributed by anyone to help decorate the sanctuary for the Advent season. Please fill out the order blank below and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the Church Office. **Deadline is December 11, 2016.**



I wish to contribute _____ Poinsettia(s) for the beautification of the Church Sanctuary for Christmas.

I would like choice of color: _____red _____white _____marble

Please attach a check or money to this order form. Make all checks payable to First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood. **The cost is \$7.50 per plant.**

The wording: _____In honor of: _____In loving memory of:

By: _____