

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 2017

PASTOR'S **POINT OF VIEW**



Michael P. Rucker
Pastor

A blessed advent to all! A question: what is an attitude for us to take during this Advent Season? (and beyond!) If we want to become a congregation that welcomes people who are not used to church or comfortable with church, I believe the following open invitation could be our guide. After all, does not this welcome reflect the loving nature of the Son of God who found us and invited us to be a disciple in God's coming kingdom?

A COVENTRY WELCOME

Posted in the Coventry Church of England

We extend a special welcome to those who are

single, married, divorced, widowed, straight, gay, confused, well-heeled or down-at-heel. We especially welcome wailing babies and excited toddlers. We welcome you whether you can sing like Pavarotti or just growl quietly to yourself. You're welcome here if you're just browsing, just woken up or just got out of prison. We don't care if you're more Christian than the Archbishop of Canterbury or haven't been to church since Christmas 10 years ago. We extend a special welcome to those who are over 60 but not grown up yet and to teenagers who are growing up too fast.

We welcome keep-fit moms, football dads, starving artists, tree huggers, latte sippers, vegetarians, junk food eaters. We welcome those who are in recovery or still addicted. We welcome you if you're having problems, are down in the dumps or don't like organized religion. We're not that keen on it either. We offer welcome to those who think the Earth is flat, work too hard, don't work, can't spell, or are here

WORSHIP WITH US THIS ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SEASON

DECEMBER 3

Our worship experience will include liturgy and music derived from the worship communities of Taize, in France, and Iona, an island off the coast of Scotland. The liturgy is poetic, the music very accessible and easy to sing. Pastor Michael will preach on two Old Testament passages, Psalm 80: 1-7, 14-19 and Isaiah 64: 1-9. The service will conclude with the Celebration of the Lord's Supper.

DECEMBER 10

Advent is a season full of anticipation of God's revelation in the birth of his Son. The amazing truth of the incarnation – God is willing to become just like us. That holy presence is comforting and empowering as Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13 and Isaiah 40: 1-11 reveal. During the service, there will be a time to remember and give thanks for the people in our families or circle of friends who are no longer with us.

DECEMBER 17

The North Hills High School Singers, directed by our own Shaun Cloonan, will bring their energy and musical gifts to us. Their songs of Advent and Christmas will be enhance and surround the readings from scripture with music. The North Hills choir will present a mini-concert immediately following the service.



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STAFF DIRECTORY

120 East Swissvale Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15218
Phone: 412-241-4613
www.fpcedgewood.org

Pastor:
The Rev. Michael P. Rucker
mprucker@fpcedgewood.org

Pastor Emeritus:
Dr. Gerald Hollingsworth

Minister of Music:
Shaun Cloonan
music@fpcedgewood.org

Organist & Pianist:
Sunny Sakai
sunnysakai4@gmail.com

FROGS Director, Office &
Cleaning Manager:
Judy Mysels
frogs@fpcedgewood.org
office@fpcedgewood.org

Building Manager:
Rob Mysels
building@fpcedgewood.org

Office Hours:
Monday–Friday
9:00AM–2:00PM

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.)

because Granny is visiting and wanted to go to church. We welcome those who are inked, pierced, both or neither.

We offer a special welcome to those who could use a prayer right now, had religion shoved down their throats as kids or got lost on the wrong road and wound up here by mistake. We welcome pilgrims, tourists, seekers, doubters and you.

Pastor Michael



WEDNESDAY MORNING ADVENT MEDITATIONS

Let's try something new. Evenings sometimes make driving difficult. **At 11:00 a.m. on Dec. 6, 13, 20**, we will meet in the lounge. Pastor Michael will lead a time of Bible study, discussion, prayer, and time for quiet meditation. No preparation will be necessary, but your presence will be valued. Refreshments (at least!) will be available.

Worship Schedule for Advent and Christmas Season (cont'd.)

DECEMBER 24 (11:00 a.m. morning service)

When we read the Old Testament through the lens of the Christian faith, the birth of Jesus is foreshadowed and foretold throughout psalms and prophets. The unveiling of the messianic promise is as wondrous today as it was then. We will hear and celebrate the birth of the baby boy we call Emmanuel (God with us!) during this Service of Lessons and Carols.

CHRISTMAS EVE (7:00 p.m.)

Please join us as we enter the mystery and celebrate the miracle (and true meaning) of Christmas. The enchantment and beauty of Holy Communion and the Candle Lighting on this Holy Night will touch the heart of everyone in your entire family.

DECEMBER 31

We call it "Snuggie Sunday." The comfort of the lounge is our sanctuary. We will worship – but very informally. We will sing – the most-loved and happy Christmas carols. We will hear stories, share stories, and share our love and laughter on this first Sunday of the Christmas season. Refreshments and drinks will be available.

JANUARY 7

A star shined in the sky. The light of that star penetrated the soul of three brave magi who traveled for months to visit the baby destined to become King. The story of "the three wise men" brings the Christmas season to an end and opens the Season of Epiphany. A season of light and revelation. The revealing will be celebrated especially during a Service of the Holy Communion.

CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATIONS



Hello sisters, brothers, and friends of FPCE,

Last month I wrote an article asking you to participate in “Congregational Conversations” that I hoped would inspire new directions for “*FPCE: The Community Church.*”

Guess what? It worked! Four formal gatherings spurred many informal conversations, email, and text exchanges. All started with prayer, a few brief comments of encouragement, which led to spirited and spirit-filled conversations, keen listening, and laughter. We now have a folder full of ideas, visions, and suggestions for FPCE’s next steps! For instance (in no particular order):

- ◇ Small in-home gatherings that would include food, fellowship, and informal worship. Church members, neighbors, and unchurched friends will be invited.
- ◇ Open up our nursery to mothers/fathers with young children for informal, mutually supportive gatherings.
- ◇ Continue our Community Dinners throughout the year. Some inside, some out. Work harder to invite attendees to become part of our ministry and mission.
- ◇ Develop discipleship opportunities focused on *the younger generation*.
- ◇ Develop a “food backpack program” for children and families who are in need.
- ◇ Develop regular prayer groups that seek for God’s will to be done in and through this church.
- ◇ Upgrade signage in front of the church.
- ◇ Develop relationships with area churches, synagogues, and mosques.
- ◇ Develop inter-faith events; featuring speakers, discussion, and meals together.
- ◇ Develop opportunities for the younger generations to explore Christianity *and* different faiths.
- ◇ Learn to use the FPCE website and Facebook page as an outreach tool.
- ◇ Develop a staff position that would focus on ministry to children, youth, and families.
- ◇ After the renovation is complete – open church facilities up to community groups. Be a faith community willing to become a community center.
- ◇ Many, many people urged us to improve publicity.

This is not an exhaustive list! These ideas will be taken to session who, along with staff, will develop an action plan. We will need to ask ourselves: which ideas are doable? Which are most promising? What is the Holy Spirit inspiring us to do...to become?

I am encouraged to see that some of these ideas have already inspired action. For instance, a postcard is being mailed to invite the entire Edgewood and many in the Swissvale community to our advent and Christmas Eve services. Over 4000 postcards will be mailed! And we will be given the opportunity to contribute to the Pittsburgh Center Re-Use. (See article in newsletter.)

I want to thank all of you who participated in these conversations. We have only just begun. Come, Holy Spirit, come! Show us the way. May your will be done!

Pastor Michael

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Come! Let us deepen our faith and strengthen the bonds between us and God, our Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There will be three opportunities every week through the season of Advent:

Tuesday Book Group

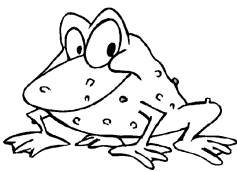
We are reading an enlightening and challenging interpretation of the titles given to Jesus that are regaled in Handle's Messiah: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. What did those titles mean when first spoken? What do they mean to us today?

Wednesday Morning Advent Meditations (11:00 a.m.)

I hope you are able to set aside an hour or so to enhance our advent time together.

Sunday morning Adult Class (9:45 a.m.)

We are working our way through a fascinating book based on Paul's Letter to the Galatians. The book is entitled, *God Unbound*. The early church faced similar challenges to those faced by the church today. How to reach people who are not comfortable with "church as usual." Paul's missionary journeys, especially to the region of Galatia, inspired new believers – and provoked controversy to those who wanted things "to be as they used to be." Casual and interesting conversations await you.



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

November was a short, but busy month for FROGS. Some of the things we did this month included: made Thanksgiving cards to be included in Deacon baskets, made butter from heavy cream and salt and sorted the food that Shadyside Academy brought for the Deacon Food Pantry. We will reconvene after the holiday to meet again in December for another short month, meeting only 5 times. We have a great army, chorus or colony (actual name of a group of frogs) of FROGS and VERY SPECIAL VOLUNTEERS!

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



Call for 2017 Reports

On Sunday, **January 28** immediately following worship, the Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held to receive the approved 2018 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-mail to Judy at office@fpcedgewood.org.

HELP WANTED

(an appeal from Pastor Michael)



If you have experience with web page administration or use Facebook for more than posting comments, food photos, political commentary, and messages, I am looking for you. My education did not include web page development and maintenance. But I need to learn. I know that there are many opportunities for using Facebook as an outreach, promotion, and communication tool. I just don't know what they could be. If someone can take a bit of time to set me on the right path – or suggest someone who can – please let me know. One of my major goals is to become more social media savvy. I have a long ways to go, but the time to get started is yesterday.



Project Manger Tree

The Board of Deacons will be working with **Wilksburg Community Minister and Mars Home for Children** 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 10**. Thank you for your support of this project.

God Bless, *The Board of Deacons*



Presbyterian Women

Christmas Party

Saturday, December 9th

1-4 p.m.

At the home of Florence Pickels

342 Ridge Avenue, Forest Hills

RSVP to Sallie Monk, 412-371-4344

or

the church office 412-241-4613

All are welcome!

WHAT DOES STEWARDSHIP MEAN TO YOU?

If you are looking for an answer, you may want to -

- Study the Bible
- Pray
- Participate in Worship at church and at home
- Serve the congregation and others

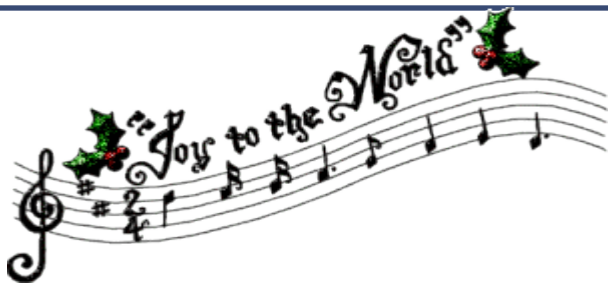
If you are looking for an answer, you may want to ask -

- Why am I Christian?
- Why am I Presbyterian?
- Do I follow Jesus?

Stewardship is a Spiritual matter and a matter of our life priorities. Let us remember what Jesus said. "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." And they were amazed at him. (Mark 12:17)



- Rick Masten cleaned out the Food Pantry, taking cartons of food to other food banks, cleaned shelves, etc. Thanks, Rick, Ed Masten and Tim Carr for a HUGE and heavy job!
- Shadyside Academy brought in over 3,000 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.
- Thank you to all who stayed after worship on November 26 to decorate the sanctuary so beautifully for the Advent and Christmas season.



MUSIC MINISTRY NEWS

Happy New (Church) Year! It's time for us to once again start our journey toward Bethlehem in the season of Advent, and that means we'll have wonderful musical moments to accompany us. **The sounds of the Edgewood Symphony and Renaissance City Choir fill the sanctuary on Saturday, December 2.** We share in the music of Taize and Iona the next day for the first Sunday of Advent. **On December 17, we'll once again welcome back my "kids," the North Hills Singers chamber choir during worship. They'll perform a mini-concert of their more secular selections after the service.**

Christmas Eve is a double dose of worship with our favorite songs during Lessons and Carols in the morning. And at our traditional candle light and communion service, assuming I am able to keep my annual holiday plague away, Tyler and I will raise our voices together in 2 of my most favorite duets that we perform, "Mary Did You Know?" and "O Holy Night."

Thank you to all in the music ministry who have continued to help provide meaningful worship over the past several months, and continue to do so week in and week out. The Sanctuary Choir, Worship Ensemble, Mandy, and Sunny, you make FPCE the special place that it is sharing your musical gifts with our congregation.

Have a blessed holiday season with your loved ones, and I look forward to seeing you in church!

Peace,
Shaun

ADVENT

Advent is a time for slowing down, for contemplation, for anticipating the birth of the Savior and what that means for us, and yet, for most of us, it is the busiest time of the year. Here is a simple Advent prayer by a woman named Melannie Svoboda. It is called "Come and Slow Me Down."

Come, Lord Jesus,
You who took time to notice lilies bobbing,
Birds soaring, and bread rising,
Come and slow me down.

You who took time to dine with acquaintances,
Go fishing with your apostles,
And barbecue breakfast on the beach for your friends,
Come and slow me down.

You who took time to play with children,
Listen to people's stories,
And share their joys and sorrows,
Come and slow me down.

When my mind is crammed with plans,
When my "to-do" list is pages long,
When I feel carried away by conflicting concerns,
Come and slow me down.

Give me the grace to stop and to be -
With you, with others,
With my own hopes, fears, questions, and dreams.
Help me to bear you slowly but surely into the world,
A world languishing and lovely,
Dark and delightful, sinful and saintly.

I ask these things of you
Through Mary, the pondering disciple,
Your mother and mine.
Come Lord Jesus, come! Amen.

A Holiday Pops Extravaganza!

Edgewood Symphony Orchestra, Featuring the Renaissance City Choir!

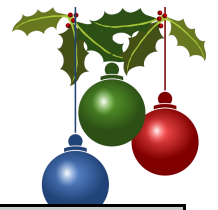
December 2, 2017 7:30pm

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EDGEWOOD

Bring the family and share your holiday season with us! The Edgewood Symphony and Renaissance City Choir invite you to experience this festive concert of seasonal favorites.



DECEMBER



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
					8:00 AA	7:30 ESO Holiday Concert
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9:30 Choir Reh. 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship Deacon Mtg. (GP)	7:00 Scouts	10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA	11:00 Morning Meditation (L)	1:00 Daytime Circle 3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	1-4PM P.W. Holiday Party 8:30 AA
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
9:30 Choir Reh. 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	7:00 Scouts	10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 Session Mtg 7:00 AA	11:00 Morning Meditation (L)	3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	8:30 AA
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
11:00 Worship with North Hills Singers 12:15 Fellowship/ Luncheon	7:00 Scouts	10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA	11:00 Morning Meditation (L)	NO FROGS	8:00 AA	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship 7:00 Candlelight Service	7:00 Scouts	NO FROGS 7:00 AA		NO FROGS	8:00 AA	8:30 AA
31						
11:00 Snuggie Sunday 12:15 Fellowship						



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120 E. Swissvale Avenue • Pittsburgh, PA 15218

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 10, 2017.**



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: _____

_____I wish to take my plant after the Christmas Eve candlelight service.