



## Christ, Be Our Light! Advent Begins our Journey to Bethlehem

“Advent” means “coming” or “arrival.” During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ’s coming into the world and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. In its historical origins, the season of Advent was patterned after the season of Lent, a six-week period of penitence and preparation for Easter. Similarly, the four weeks of Advent present an opportunity for communal discernment and personal examination, as the church prepares to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord and looks with hope for Christ’s return.



## PASTOR'S POINT OF VIEW



The world as we know it has changed – dramatically! Nothing is what it once was; an invisible virus has touched the face of the earth; governments are issuing mandates ordering people to wear masks and/or stay at home; businesses have gone “belly-up” as a result; individuals have become unemployed; families are short on food and money to pay bills; protests have risen

around the globe; racial disharmony has increased exponentially. As a result, millions are living with a profound sense of anxiety, hopelessness, with fear wrapping its fingers around many minds and lives. “When will things return to normal?” is the question on everyone’s mind and in conversations. As leaders scramble to find quick answers to the inquiry, no one knows for sure what to expect.

In antiquity, the people of Israel struggled with similar questions and circumstances. Continuously, they were overtaken by foreign nations, experienced living under the rulership of foreign kings, struggled to make ends meet, lived looking for a brighter day. Amid their national circumstance and insecurity, they were expecting the fulfillment of One who the prophets had mentioned time and again. Isaiah, in particular, said, “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this,” (Isaiah 9.6-7). There was a hopeful expectation; a preparation that they, as a people, needed to do; a knowledge that God loved them enough to make such a promise; a joy that the promise would be fulfilled; an adoration to God for His sovereignty.

As we enter the Christmas season of 2020, amid the turmoil our world is living, let us turn our sight to the One who *is* Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace. He came once as a baby, lived among first-century Jews to show the very character and essence of the Father, offered His own life on our behalf so that we could have a relationship with God, and promised that He will return for His people. This Christmas, may the peace that surpasses all understanding fill our hearts and minds and, like the shepherds that night, may our hearts be filled with joy, “looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds,” (Titus 2.13-14).

Have a blessed and safe Christmas,  
Pastor Anthony Rivera



# Worship Schedule

On November 13, 2020, an emergency Session meeting was convened to discuss the rise of COVID-19 cases across Allegheny County. As a precautionary measure, and for the safety of the members of FPCE, it was determined that in-person worship will be suspended effective November 15, 2020. As such, online worship will resume and live streamed on Facebook that same day starting at 11 a. m. An edited version of the worship service will be uploaded on YouTube and SoundCloud the following day. A PDF version of the bulletin will be emailed Fridays, and also made available on the website for everyone to download and participate in worship and follow along in Scripture reading. When conditions become favorable for the return for in-person worship, an email will be forwarded as well as posted on the website. While you are at home, make the time to seek the face of God. Pray, and trust in the God that is sovereign. “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me,” (John 14.1).

## **Sunday, December 6**

Second Sunday of Advent: “Prepare” (Isaiah 40.3-5)

## **Sunday, December 13**

Third Sunday of Advent: “Love” (John 3.16-19)

## **Sunday, December 20**

Fourth Sunday of Advent: “Joy” (Luke 2.8-20)

## **Thursday, December 24**

Christmas Eve: “Adoration” (John 1.1-5, 14, 18)

*\*Assuming we are still virtual at this point, the pre-recorded and edited service will be scheduled to post on Facebook and YouTube at 7:00PM on Christmas Eve.*

## **Sunday, December 27**

The final Sunday of 2020 during the season of Christmastide.



## **Annual Christmas Tree Sale**

Koenig Field, Edgewood

Saturday, December 5th, 8 AM - 8 PM

Sunday, December 6th, 12 PM - 6 PM

The Troop 23 Christmas Tree Sale will be shortened this year to just one weekend. Hours will be 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday, December 5, 2020 and from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday, December 6, 2020. If any trees remain after the 6th we will be selling the remaining trees from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, December 12, 2020. Come out and pick yourself a great tree while supporting a great cause.

Troop 23 would like to thank everyone who has supported the troop every year by buying a tree. The scouts use the money raised from the Christmas tree sale to fund their activities during the year. Merry Christmas Edgewood!

## **The Digital Upper Room**

As a subscriber to *The Upper Room* devotional, FPCE was given access to a PDF version of the November-December issue through a private link on the publisher’s website. To download to your device, go to [www.upperroom.org/standingorderchurches](http://www.upperroom.org/standingorderchurches)



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www.fpcedgewood.org  
412-241-4613



*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.*

## OUR CHURCH FAMILY

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**LOVE GOD  
EACH OTHER  
OUR NEIGHBORS**

## Session Notes

- Voted to enter the deaths of Charles Ganster and George MacDonald into the church register.
- Heard the preliminary 2021 budget.
- Voted to close the church until further notice, due to Covid-19.

## Prayer Warriors

Did you know that we have a dedicated group that prays for you constantly? A core group of FPCE members maintain a prayer list that is continually updated as joys and concerns are passed along in the life of our congregation. They set aside intentional time and pray for specific individuals or situations that are brought to their attention and follow up on those prayer requests with calls and emails. If you would like to know more about our "Prayer Warriors" or would like to be added to the email list and make intentional prayer a focus of yours, please contact Michelle Santo at [cshell73@yahoo.com](mailto:cshell73@yahoo.com).



The sanctuary has been decorated with a limited version of the "Hanging of the Greens." Once the poinsettias arrive and are used for the remainder of the decorations, the sanctuary will be as beautiful as ever!

Note that on the poinsettia order form a change has been made to adjust for our online worship setting. If you wish to pick your flowers up early, you may choose the option of coming to the church during the week of Christmas and taking them to enjoy at home. Or you could elect to have them used for sanctuary decorations.



## Sharing the Joys & Concerns of FPCE

- Condolences/sympathies to Michelle Santo and family on the passing of her grandmother, Wilma
- Wanted to praise the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders and their teachers from Shadyside Academy again for their fantastic food collection to replenish our shelves and also to help fill Thanksgiving/Christmas bags for WCM.



## Shady Side Academy Food Drive

2020 isn't all bad! Look at the bountiful food collection Shady Side Academy Junior School again this year gave to us and WCM. These 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, parents and their teachers work so hard every year collecting food for us. Shady Side Academy has partnered with FPCE for more than 20 years on this annual food drive.

This year was a little different, but they still wanted to participate in some way. They did a fantastic job in collecting appropriate holiday food and also replenishing our shelves in our pantry. Rick Masten and his friend Tom Kilgour made two trips to Shady Side Academy, collected the food and brought it into our social room where we separated it. In the past, the kids bring their food they collected on their school bus and make repeated trips from the bus into the church, then it is explained to them how their wonderful generosity is used both by our food pantry and WCM's. Their excitedness and wholesomeness in their annual collection is very humbling and very, very much appreciated.

We plan on sending our thanks to them when they are back in-person schooling to again explain how important they are to us and our community. We are truly blessed to have this special connection with Shady Side Academy.



For the past several years, FPCE has partnered with Mars Home for Youth when collecting donations for the annual Manger Tree drive.

MHY Family Services is a non-profit organization serving youth with intensive behavioral needs and social challenges, and providing them a safe environment on their journey to wellness. Each year, MHY supports over 300 children through our residential program, and over 1,000 boys, girls and families in our community through our specialized trauma-based treatment. Our own Jim and Lisa Segedy are active with MHY as volunteers and members of the board of directors.

This year, more than ever, we know that kids are struggling and facing challenges far beyond their years. YOUR support throughout the holiday season is critically important, not only to fully meet our kids' daily care needs, but also provide *Christmas cheer!*

YOU can support our children through the opportunities we have shared below. Please know that we will ensure children receive individualized and personalized gifts at Christmas **using gift cards and monetary donations** in addition to donations received from our **Wish List** (posted on the next page).

YOUR generosity will bring a smile to a child's face on Christmas morning.

**Thank you for sharing the hope and joy of the season with the kids at MHY!**

# MHY Family Services'

# Holiday Giving Program

2020



Our top priority throughout this year has been the health and safety of our children, staff, friends and local community supporters. For this holiday season, we are excited to share the variety of ways we hope you will consider to continue to safely donate and give to the children and families in our care. It is because of YOU that we are able to keep our kids safe and our doors open as an essential service, and we are grateful for your continued support and generosity!

## You Can Support MHY through:

### ONLINE SHOPPING - Purchase essential items from our Christmas Wish List



- Visit sites such as Amazon Smile\*, Target & Walmart and have gifts shipped directly to MHY Family Services ~ Holiday Program, 521 Route 228, Mars, PA 16046 (\*Please consider making MHY your Amazon Smile charity of choice.)
- If shipping gifts is not possible, we will have limited drop-off available by appointment only. Please contact Karen Harvey 724-625-3141 x 283 or by email [kharvey@mhyfamilyservices.org](mailto:kharvey@mhyfamilyservices.org) to schedule an appointment and receive further information.
- **Please include your name and address so we may acknowledge your gift**
- **Please plan to have gifts delivered no later than December 7th**



### GIFT CARDS

- Giant Eagle, Target, Walmart, Amazon, Kohl's, Five Below, Dollar Tree, Subway & McDonald's
- Mail to MHY Family Services ~ Holiday Program, 521 Route 228, Mars, PA 16046



### MONETARY DONATIONS

- Please make all checks payable to "Mars Home for Youth Foundation" and mail to MHY Family Services ~ Holiday Program, 521 Route 228, Mars, PA 16046
- Visit our secure on-line donation portal at [mhyfamilyservices.org/give-now/](https://mhyfamilyservices.org/give-now/)
- Please note if you would like to restrict your gift for a specific need

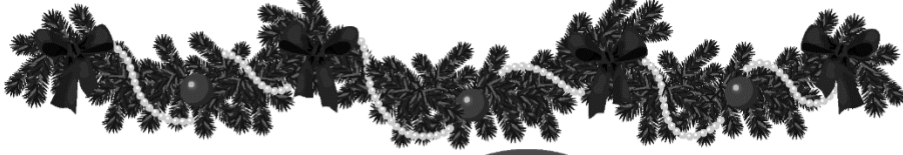


Thank you for your kindness and for making our children and families a priority this holiday season!



# Christmas Wish List

## 2020



### Critical Needs

- Twin Size Comforters
- Twin Size Sheets
- Pillows
- Bath Towels & Wash Clothes
- Body Wash
- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Deodorant

### Personal Hygiene Products

- Chapstick
- Toothpaste & Toothbrush Covers
- Hair Brushes & Hair Picks
- Multicultural Hair Products
- Dove Soap or Sensitive Skin Soap
- Lotion for Sensitive Skin
- Plastic Reusable Water Bottles
- Feminine Products
- Plastic Soap Box Containers

### Miscellaneous Needs

- Laundry Baskets
- Storage Containers
- Duffle Bags
- Bean Bag Chairs
- Batteries (AAA, AA or C)
- Large Reusable Shopping Bags (from TJ Maxx & Marshalls)
- Lysol Wipes & Hand Sanitizer
- Tissues
- Plastic Laundry Baskets
- Weighted Blankets



### Electronics

- Headphones & Earbuds (noise cancelling)
- Alarm Clocks with Radio
- G or PG DVD's
- DVD Players
- Nintendo Switch
- Nintendo Switch E Games (all ages)

### Attire

- Athletic Shoes & Winter Boots - Adult Sizes 6-12
- Coats, Hats & Gloves - Kids & Adult Sizes
- Socks & Underwear (all ages)

### Games & Other Fun

- Card Games/Board Games
- Legos
- Puzzles
- Rubik's Cube
- Remote Control Cars
- Young Adult Books
- Fidget Spinners & Gadgets
- Stress Balls
- Thinking Putty/Play-Doh

### Arts & Crafts

- Craft & Art Kits
- Construction & Drawing Paper
- Copy Paper
- Mechanical Pencils & Replacement Lead
- Journals without Wires
- Stationery & Stamps
- Origami Kits
- Kinetic Sand
- Calming Coloring Books (all ages)

### Sporting Equipment

- Footballs & Flag Football Kits
- Basketballs
- Volleyballs
- Kickballs
- Wiffle Ball Sets
- Ball Pumps



### **\*ALL DONATIONS NEED TO BE RECEIVED BY DECEMBER 7th\***

Please consider shopping online to purchase items from this list and shipping gifts directly to MHY Family Services ~ Holiday Program, 521 Route 228, Mars, PA 16046 by December 7th, or you may send a monetary donation made payable to "Mars Home for Youth Foundation."

**\*Please include your name and address so we may acknowledge your gift.\***

Please contact Karen Harvey at 724-625-3141 x 283 or by email [kharvey@mhyfamilyservices.org](mailto:kharvey@mhyfamilyservices.org) with any questions or to schedule an appointment to drop off holiday gifts.

**From *Presbyterians Today* Magazine:**

## **Advent offers a ‘Great Reset’**

**The season invites us to practice seeing things differently**

*By Jason Whitehead | Presbyterians Today*

We are creatures of habit. We like predictability and embrace routines, many of which provide a measure of stability when the world shifts around us. The experience of living in a pandemic for most of 2020, though, has disrupted any predictability in our lives. The senseless deaths of Black men and women brought attention to an epidemic of racism, calling into question assumptions we made about the world. Add to these destabilizing circumstances the sheltering-in-place guidelines that brought the inability to physically go to the places that have given us a respite from the world, and we have a recipe for ongoing fear, anger and distress.

It is safe to say that 2020 has been a year no one wanted. However, that doesn't mean it has to be a lost year. I've heard some people refer to 2020 as the "Great Reset" — a time to take stock of our lives, offering a chance to inventory how we live, move and breathe, in order to become the people God calls us to be.

The Advent season is perfect for exploring the possibility of a reset. This season has always been about the Savior sent to reset the world. And every year, we remember a revolutionary act of love that gives us pause and shows us what it means to be disciples. For millennia, we have celebrated a season that glorifies change and calls us to soften our hearts to the world and people around us.

This year, though, we need to be intentional in the spiritual practice of resetting our lives. Many of us will not be returning to physical worship spaces for Advent as the health risks are still too great, and so we must actively seek the holy among us. For that to happen, we must be willing to look around the same house or apartment and at the same people, see them with new eyes, as well as hear them with new ears. This resetting is in itself a revolutionary act of love.

Every morning, I go for a walk with my wife. I just feel better when I do it. However, I don't always feel good while I'm doing it. It's cold some mornings. We have to wear masks that are uncomfortable. It's early, and I'm a night owl. If I weigh the pros and cons, then there are more reasons to stay in bed than to go on those early morning walks. But my walk is not just a walk. It is a chance to be present with my spouse. It is a moment to appreciate my health. It is an opportunity to welcome a new day with vigor and creativity. Our walks are not perfunctory health prescriptions. They are moments when there are opportunities to see — and be — more than the sum of my parts. If nothing else, they are moments to feel gratitude, and there is nothing more theologically important during Advent than to experience gratitude.

If Advent teaches us nothing else, then let it teach us that a great reset can happen. The only thing we have to do is be willing to see how God's love is infused into the everyday moments, experiences and objects of our lives. Honestly, this is hard work. It requires us to be mindful about bringing Emmanuel, God with us, in every part of our lives. Moreover, it requires us to be creative and flexible in how we approach our lives together. Advent's time of preparation and anticipation is a lesson in how to transform the things we take for granted every day into everyday sacred gifts.

*Jason Whitehead is a therapist, pastor, educator and coach at Mosaic Insight in Denver.*

## **Put into Practice**

### **The Advent ‘Great Reset’ Challenge**

Start slow and small. Look around you. Name something out loud that you appreciate. Take a moment and be grateful for that object, person or even experience. Don't be grateful for your ownership. Be grateful for its presence.

Imagine now what your life would be like without the object or person that you named. What would you lose? What would be different?

Now expand your awareness. What might other people be experiencing who don't have the same opportunities as you? What might they have that you don't? What do you have that they don't? Where does your heart break in these connections? What does that call you to do or become?



First Presbyterian Church of  
**EDGEWOOD**  
*The Community Church*  
 120 East 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 6, 2020.**

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, or can be paid using the donate button at [fpcedgewood.org](http://fpcedgewood.org). **The cost is \$7.50 per plant.**

The wording:                      \_\_\_\_\_ In honor of:                      \_\_\_\_\_ In loving memory of:

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By: \_\_\_\_\_

- I wish to pick up my poinsettia Dec. 21-24, 9AM-2PM
- My poinsettia can be used for the decoration of the sanctuary