

## Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness...Christ Be Our Light!

“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.



### Between memory and hope

An excerpt from the *Companion to the Book of Common Worship* (Geneva Press, 2003, 96)

In Advent we expectantly wait for the One who has already come. We anticipate the promised justice of God’s new world, yet we praise God who raised the “righteous branch” to rule with justice and righteousness. We hope for the restoration of the afflicted, the tormented, and the grieving, yet we delight that healing has come in Christ. We long for the beating of swords into plowshares, yet we rejoice that the Prince of Peace has appeared. We yearn for the barren deserts of our inner cities to flourish, yet we laud the desert Rose that has bloomed. We dream of the land where lions and lambs live in harmony, yet we acclaim the child born to lead us into the promised land.

Here at Edgewood we will celebrate the anticipation and “longing” of Advent in our Sunday morning worship services. The Rev. Kellie Weekley-Mills will be with us as guest pastor for the whole Advent season, including Christmas Eve. Her sermons each week will focus on a different perspective:

- Isaiah longing for redemption (hope)
- Mary longing for justice (peace)
- Joseph longing for something to believe in (love)
- the shepherds and angels longing for something to sing about (joy)

Our candle lighting of the Advent wreath will guide us visually in our longing for light, ending with our Christmas celebration and lighting the Christ candle.



We will also participate in a creative activity during our worship services. Upon arrival, those attending will be given a strip of cloth. After the sermon, we will be encouraged to reflect on our longing in prayer while holding the cloth. During the hymn that follows, those interested are invited to come forward to lay the cloth in the manger set up in the front of the sanctuary. This is symbolic of our preparation for the coming of Christ – physically lining the “cradle” as a blanket with our prayers of self-examination and longing for the presence of Christ. Join us in preparation for and in celebration of the Light of the World!



First Presbyterian Church of  
**EDGEWOOD**  
The Community Church

120 East Swissvale Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15218  
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*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

Office & Cleaning Manager  
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**LOVE GOD**  
**EACH OTHER**  
**OUR NEIGHBORS**



We continue our Sunday morning worship at 11:00AM in the sanctuary with various guest pastors, liturgists, and members of our music ministry. The service is livestreamed on Facebook and then posted to YouTube and SoundCloud within the next day or 2 for online viewing and listening.

The Rev. Kellie Weekley-Mills leads us in worship for the Advent season, including Christmas Eve, with the theme "Longing for Light."

**December 5:** Advent 2, Communion. *Longing for Justice and Peace.* Mary, inspired by the Holy Spirit, declares that Christ will bring a peace that is undergirded by justice. We often long for peace, but are not so willing to work for the justice that is necessary for real peace. While inner peace is achievable with God's help, we should never be a peace in the world when others are suffering. One gives us the strength and courage to work for the other.

**December 12:** Advent 3, Receiving new members. *Longing for Something to Believe In.* Joseph showed great trust and love for Mary and for God. He put everything on the line to honor God's instruction. It is a powerful thing to be highly committed to something, to be willing to put one's own self at risk for the cause. We long to have that kind of purpose in life, and God offers us something to truly believe in and work for, and that is commitment to live in love of God and neighbor.

**December 19:** Advent 4, Emerging with Blue Christmas. *Longing for Something to Sing About.* There are many things to bring us down in life. We long for joy! How can we carry joy even in the midst of challenging times? The shepherds experience it in openness and wonder, the angels know it in the chance to share some VERY good news. We may find it in unexpected places. The joy that comes from God is not superficial, it may come in the midst of tears or pain as easily as in times of joy. It is deep and abiding - good news, indeed.



## CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

**Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion:** Our period of longing ends as we rejoice that "The Light Shines in the Darkness" with the coming of the Christ child. The 8:00PM worship service will include the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and the return of our traditional candle lighting, when we can carry the light out into the world.

**December 26:** A service of Lessons & Carols includes familiar readings telling the Christmas story and our favorite songs.



# Holiday Musical Events at FPCE



## Edgewood Symphony Orchestra presents "Back Home for the Holidays" December 4

The ESO will be Back Home for the Holidays in the FPCE Sanctuary at 7:30PM on Saturday, December 4. This concert will again feature performances by each of the sections of our orchestra — winds, brass, and strings! Repertoire includes Bach *Brandenburg No. 3*, Humperdinck's *Hansel & Gretel*

*Overture*, Handel's *Royal Fireworks* music, and many holiday favorites including fun with the Toy Symphony! Tickets are free of charge but reservations required, please visit [edgewoodsymphony.org](http://edgewoodsymphony.org) to order. Suggested \$15 donation greatly appreciated!

## FPCE Hosts Community Carol Sing to Celebrate Light Up Edgewood December 11

Help us usher in the holiday season in the Edgewood community by joining our pick-up caroling choir! Light Up Edgewood is scheduled for 7:00-9:00PM on Saturday, December 11 and includes the tree lighting at Memorial Park, a walking tour, Santa's arrival, live performances, Christmas movies, vendors for last-minute gifts, horse & carriage rides, refreshments, and more. We have extended invitations to members of our own Sanctuary Choir, Vocal Confluence, East Shore Chorale, and Voces Solis, but anyone who would like to join is welcome!



Our Caroling Choir will meet in the church sanctuary at 6:30PM to run through 4 or 5 well-known carols in 4-part harmony, then walk across the street to sing them for the tree lighting at 7:00PM. Hot cocoa and cookies will be available after for those participating, and there is also an opportunity for interested singers to be strolling carolers during the walking tour along Maple Avenue. Join us!



## Vocal Confluence Holiday Show December 12

### "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year"

Vocal Confluence proudly presents our annual holiday show, "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year." This is our first performance since our last holiday show in December 2019, and we are thrilled to be performing our music for you in-person again. We will not be requiring the purchase of tickets to attend but we suggest a \$10 donation at the door.

**COVID PROTOCOL:** Following the lead of choruses in our area and across the country, we will be requiring masks for all audience members, as well as proof of COVID-19 vaccination for those ages 12 and up. Masks must cover the nose and mouth at all times. Please have your physical CDC card, or a photo of it, ready at the front door prior to entering the church. If you are not feeling well, we ask that you stay home to prevent the spread of any illness at our event. Pews will be blocked to allow for social distancing - therefore capacity will be roughly 150 guests on a first come, first served basis. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we navigate in-person performances in a post-pandemic world.

# Session Notes

At their November 9 meeting, Session approved the following:

- The 2022 budget with an 8-1 vote.
- The addition of Sue Pollick, Roberta Thompson, Jen and Johnny Hrebik to the church rolls.
- The transfer of George Pow to Lincoln Place Presbyterian Church.
- AA meetings can only be cancelled by a majority vote of Session.
- Inclusion in the minutes, the approval with commendation of the Session Minutes and Church Rolls and Register for 2020.



## Deacons' Doings...

### Shady Side Academy Visits FPCE

Once again on November 18th, FPCE was blessed by the Shady Side Academy 2nd grade students. Over 20 years SSA has utilized their efforts with an outreach program for our Deacon pantry. Their labor in reaching out to their school community has produced overwhelming assistance in supplying and stocking the church's pantry. Often their efforts result in over 400 various items including soups, canned vegetables, pasta, breakfast foods, toiletries etc. Such is that we Deacons are capable of extending a helping hand to the Wilkinsburg Community Ministry with the overflow for Thanksgiving and Christmas. I wish everyone could experience the joy and enthusiasm these children display as they arrive on the bus. I am proud to speak with them after and explain the fruitful consequences of their good deed. Thank you, Shady Side Academy! Well done again. *Rick Masten*



**FOCUS**   
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

### ***Tuesday Book Club***

Our weekly Book Club is currently reading and discussing the book "Hidden Christmas" by Timothy Keller. This group meets at 10:00AM on Tuesdays at the home of Rhonda Apossos, 361 Maple Avenue, just a few blocks away from the church. All are welcome!

### ***Wednesday Night Zoom Bible Study***

The Wednesday evening online Zoom Bible Study group has finished their look into the life of Joseph and is taking a break for a special Christmas study before moving on to discuss Elijah and Elisha. The Zoom link is available on the website and in the weekly email updates sent out to church members. Come and join the discussion on Wednesday nights at 7:00pm online! Questions? Shoot an email to Tim Hoffman at [HoffmanTL@gmail.com](mailto:HoffmanTL@gmail.com).

### ***Sunday School***

Sunday School for our littlest ones takes place during worship in the Gathering Place. Just drop your child off and Rhonda, Nancy, or Lorraine will lead them in a Bible activity while you are in worship!



## Congregational Meeting: December 12

All active members of the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood are asked to attend a Congregational Meeting immediately following worship on Sunday, December 12. The purpose of this meeting is to elect officers for 2022 from the slate presented by the nominating committee, and to review and discuss the preliminary budget approved by Session. The budget document will be emailed out to the congregation along with the bulletin by Friday, December 10 so that members have a chance to look over it before the meeting in the event any questions need to be asked. Please join us as we take care of the business involved in continuing our ministry at FPCE.



## Advent Prayer Vigil: December 17

Advent is a time of expectation, a time where we keep vigilant watch for the coming of Christ because "...you do not know when the time will come." (Mark 13:33) Our Advent prayer vigil is an opportunity for you to practice the discipline of watchfulness. Friday, December 17 our sanctuary will be open from 9:00AM-2:00PM. A SignUp Genius link will be emailed out and posted on the website the week of the vigil. People may sign up for half hour slots. You may come as an individual, couple, small group or family. More than one person or group may be present at the same time. This is a great opportunity to enter more fully into our journey toward Bethlehem.

## Pastoral Search Update

During the month of November, the Pastor Nominating Committee finalized the list of candidates we were interested in extending an invitation to begin conversations. As of the printing of this newsletter, we have begun Zoom first round interviews. There will likely be a pause during December as holiday schedules fill up, with the plan of continuing just after the New Year.

## Pastor Search Committee Update



As a reminder, here is the process the PNC is following:

### *Starting Up*

1. PNC begins meeting, with initial orientation by COM/Branch Minister (*mid-August*)
2. PNC meets on a regular schedule, with the COM liaison present frequently (*started in August*)
3. PNC Prepares Ministry Information Form (MIF) (*completed in September*)
4. MIF Form approved by Session, COM Liaison, and Branch Minister (*end of September*)

### *The Work of Discernment*

1. PNC receives and reviews Personal Information Forms (PIFs) (*beginning in October, ongoing*)
2. PNC identifies candidates for initial interview (*November-December*)
3. PNC requests executive reference checks from Presbytery and contacts references of candidates
4. PNC conducts additional interview(s), arranges a neutral pulpit if desired, and identifies a finalist(s) to meet with COM for a Clearance interview.
5. PNC extends call/offer and negotiates terms of call

### *Wrapping Up*

1. Candidate and terms presented to Session for approval; congregational meeting is scheduled.
2. First Sunday and "Meet 'n Greet" activities scheduled.
3. Pastor begins!



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.

Here is the 2021 Christmas Wish List sent to us from MHY:

*Critical Needs:* Twin Size Comforters & Sheets, Big Bath Towels & Washcloths, Body Wash & Deodorant, Shampoo/Conditioner/2 in 1 Shampoo, Multicultural Hair Products

*Personal Care Needs:* New Duffle Bags & Backpacks, Large Reusable Shopping Bags (*from TJ Maxx & Marshalls*), Plastic Reusable Water Bottles, (*new*) Batteries (AA & AAA), Feminine Products, Hair Brushes & Hair Picks, Body Spray/Cologne Gift Sets, Athletic Shoes (*Men sizes 6-13, Women sizes 6-11*), Sports Bras (*Adult sizes*), Boxer Briefs (*Men & Women sizes*), Socks & Underwear (*Adult sizes*)

*Gift Cards:* Amazon, Walmart, Giant Eagle, Target, Aldi, Chick-fil-A, Dollar Tree, Five Below, Kohl's, Michaels

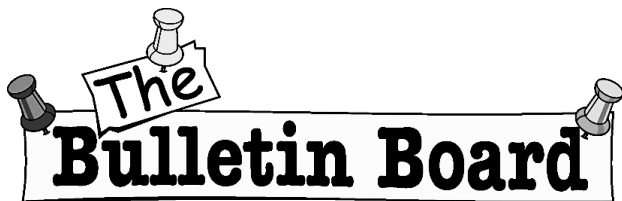
*Arts & Crafts:* Tie Dye & Jewelry Making Kits, Gem Art & Paint by Number Kits, Art Canvas without staples, Acrylic & Pastel Paints and Brushes, Kinetic Sand & Molding Clay, Poster Boards & Markers, Origami Books & Paper

*Electronics:* MP3 Players, Small Portable Speakers, Alarm Clocks with Radios, DVD's & 3D movies - G/PG/PG13, Nintendo Switch & E games (*all ages*), Noise-cancelling Headphones & Earbuds

*Games & Other Fun:* Legos (*all types*), New Stuffed Animals, Squishies & Squishmallows, Stress Balls & Fidget Spinners, Push Pop Bubble Toys, Thinking Putty & Play-Doh, Young Adult Books, Wall Stickers for Décor, Puzzles, Board & Card Games, Magic: The Gathering Cards, Word Search & Crossword Games, Candy & Holiday Treats

*Monetary Donations:* To ensure MHY youth have all they need to support their individual, personal care and therapeutic needs, please consider a monetary gift. Giving is easy! Simply visit [mhyfamilyservices.org](http://mhyfamilyservices.org)

**\*All Donations Need to be Received by December 6th\*** Shop online and ship gifts directly to: MHY Family Services "HOLIDAY PROGRAM" 521 Route 228 Mars, PA 16046



*Sharing the Joys & Concerns  
of the FPCE Family*

- Thank you to the Deacons who made harvest baskets that were delivered to members and friends of the church who have experienced loss in the past year.
- Wanted to praise the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders and their teachers from Shady Side Academy again for their fantastic food collection to replenish our shelves and also to help fill Thanksgiving/ Christmas bags for WCM.
- Thanks to ALL who stayed after worship on Nov. 21 for the Hanging of the Greens. Extra special thanks to Rick Masten and his friend, who, on Nov. 18, cleaned windowsills and decorated that day. It was so fantastic to see all who stayed after and participated!

# 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, 2021.**

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:

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

\_\_\_\_\_ I wish to take my plant after the Christmas Eve candlelight service.

# December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Meeting Locations: Book Club – Apossos Home AA – Social Room Vocal Confluence & ESO – Sanctuary Milepost6 – Basement Band Room	PNC – Gathering Place Flute Lessons – Lounge Session – Gathering Place Choir, Ensemble, Worship – Sanctuary Scouts – Scout or Social Room	1	2	3	4	5:00 Flute (L)  7:30 ESO Concert
5 9:30 Choir 11:00 Worship/ Communion	6 <i>Flower Deadline</i> <i>MHY Deadline</i> 6:30 Scouts (SC) 7:00 VC (S)	7 10:00 Book Club  8:00 AA (SR)	8 7:00 VC (S) 7:00 Zoom Study	9 7:00 Milepost6 (B)	10 5:00 Flute (L)  8:00 AA (SR)	11 6:30 Carol Sing 7:00 Light Up Edgewood 8:30 AA (SR)
12 9:30 Choir 11:00 Worship 12:00 Cong. Mtg. 3:00 VC Concert	13 6:30 Scouts (SC)	14 10:00 Book Club  7:00 Session (GP) 8:00 AA (SR)	15 7:00 Zoom Study	16 7:00 Milepost6 (S)	17 <b>9:00-2:00</b> <b>Prayer Vigil</b>  8:00 AA (SR)	18 9:30 Flute Studio Recital (GP)  8:30 AA (SR)
19 9:30 Worship Ens. 11:00 Emerging/ Blue Christmas	20 6:30 Scouts (SC)	21 10:00 Book Club  8:00 AA (SR)	22 7:00 Zoom Study	23	24 <i>Christmas Eve</i>  <b>8:00 Christmas</b> <b>Eve Candlelight</b> <b>&amp; Communion</b>	25 <i>Christmas Day</i>  8:30 AA (SR)
26 11:00 Lessons & Carols Worship	27 Office Closed	28 10:00 Book Club  8:00 AA (SR)	29 7:00 Zoom Study	30	31 <i>New Year's Eve</i>	1 <i>New Year's Day</i>  8:30 AA (SR)



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**December 4**  
**Edgewood Symphony**  
**Holiday Concert**



**December 11**  
**Light Up Edgewood**  
**Community Carol Sing**

**December 12**  
**Vocal Confluence**  
**Holiday Show**



**December 24**  
**Christmas Eve**  
**Candlelight**  
**& Communion**

