

## Advent 'reorients us to the radical hope of the gospel'

Excerpted from a November 2018 article published on pcusa.org by Paul Seebeck | Presbyterian News Service

Before Thanksgiving is even finished, people are inundated with the sights and sounds of Christmas. Within this consumer culture, it's easy to confuse the season of Advent with the number of shopping days until December 25.

"In Christian tradition, Advent challenges us to think about time in a much deeper way," said the Rev. Dr. David Gambrell, in the Office of Theology and Worship of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) "Advent asks us: What are we really waiting and hoping for? How long will evil, injustice and violence continue? What is God doing in the world? How can we in the church prepare for the coming of God's righteousness, justice and peace?"

Gambrell says Advent has a double focus which "reorients us to the radical hope of the gospel."

The season begins with the church crying out with prophets and apostles, praying for God's holy realm to come quickly. As the days of Advent draw to a close, the church rejoices with the gospel writers, celebrating the one who has already come into the world to save us.

"Jesus Christ has come to transform the world — and is coming again to complete the work of God's new creation," he says. "So, we begin the Christian year by looking ahead to the end of the story, the time when God will wipe away every tear."

For the Rev. Dr. Kimberly Bracken Long, editor of Presbyterian Mission Agency's "Call to Worship," this is the hope on which Christians stake their lives.

"While many in the church are familiar with the idea of Advent as a season of waiting, counting the days until we celebrate the birth of Jesus," she explains, "there is a much deeper waiting and deeper yearning — of watching in expectation for Christ to come again."

"God's justice is coming," says Long, "and with it, God's peace."



## December 2022 Worship Schedule

Join us Sunday mornings at 11:00AM in the Sanctuary for worship. Services are livestreamed on Facebook and then posted to YouTube and SoundCloud within a day and shared via email to the congregation. If you are not receiving the weekly emails and would like to, visit [fpcedgewood.org/contact](http://fpcedgewood.org/contact) and fill out the sign-up form.

**December 4:** Second Sunday of Advent: PEACE; In Matthew 3:1-12, John the Baptist cries out from the wilderness, "Change your hearts and lives! Here comes the Kingdom of Heaven!" We will celebrate the Lord's Supper/Communion together

**December 11:** Third Sunday of Advent: JOY; In Matthew 11:2-11, John the Baptist sends messengers to ask Jesus who he is, and Jesus shares all the ways in which he is healing community. There will be a congregational meeting following worship.

**December 18:** Fourth Sunday of Advent: LOVE; Matthew 1:18-25 shares how an angel appeared to Joseph saying that Mary will give birth to "God-with-us." The North Hills Singers will be joining us for worship and offering a mini concert following the service.

**Wednesday, December 21:** Blue Christmas will be held at *Waverly Presbyterian Church* at 7:00PM. The relentless joy and cheer of the Christmas season can offer further alienation to folks already struggling with financial problems, broken relationships, or unresolved grief. This is a mournful, somber service offered to stand in solidarity with those in pain.

**CHRISTMAS EVE, Saturday, December 24:** Nativity of the Lord; Join us at **8:00PM** for a candlelight and communion service, celebrating the incarnation of Jesus—God-Enfleshed Among Us!

**December 25: Christmas Day at home!** There will be NO in-person worship this morning. Please join us on Facebook and YouTube from the comfort of your home. The pre-recorded service will "go live" at 11:00AM and then will be available to watch any time after that.



120 East Swissvale Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15218  
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

Pastor

**Rev. Jason Dauer**

[pastorjason@fpcedgewood.org](mailto:pastorjason@fpcedgewood.org)

Office & Cleaning Manager

**Judy Mysels**

[office@fpcedgewood.org](mailto:office@fpcedgewood.org)

Building Manager

**Rob Mysels**

[building@fpcedgewood.org](mailto:building@fpcedgewood.org)

Minister of Music

**Shaun Cloonan**

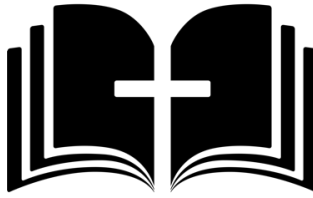
[music@fpcedgewood.org](mailto:music@fpcedgewood.org)

Pianist

**Sunny Sakai**

[sunnysakai4@gmail.com](mailto:sunnysakai4@gmail.com)

**LOVE GOD  
EACH OTHER  
OUR NEIGHBORS**



*Pastor Jason's  
Journal*  
Monthly Reflections from  
FPCE Pastor Jason Dauer



### Jolly Old Saint Nicholas... of Myra

My favorite Christmas movie is the 1970 stop motion special *Santa Claus is Comin' to Town* by Rankin/Bass Productions. Based on the song of the same name, the film tells the story of how things came to be: who is Santa? where did the elves come from? why does he go down chimneys? From the Winter Warlock to the Burgermeister Meisterburger, it's a classic, but it begs the question: Who truly was St. Nicholas?



Unfortunately, we know very little, and much of what we know is disputed. Around 270 CE, he was born in Patara, an ancient city on the coast of modern-day Turkey. When his parents died, he used his inheritance to help the poor, the hungry, and the sick.

The most famous legend tells of a man and his three daughters. The man was quite wealthy, but after an attack on a trading ship, he lost all his wealth. Desperate, he prayed that God would save his daughters from poverty, for he did not have enough money for dowries. This custom and tradition is quite foreign to us today, but in Nicholas's time, fathers had to offer something of value to prospective husbands—the dowry.

Not hearing a response from God, the father decided he would have to either sell his eldest daughter into slavery or force her into prostitution to bring in money to support his other two daughters. Word of this spread throughout the community, and Nicholas decided to do something. He knew the family would not accept his gift, so in the middle of the night, he threw a bag of gold through an open window. The crisis was averted! And the eldest daughter was able to marry, using the bag of gold as the dowry. However, the father eventually faced the same predicament with his second daughter. Again, a bag of gold mysteriously appeared overnight. She married. And finally, he faced the issue with his third daughter, and a bag of gold appeared again. She married, too.

The legend says on the final night when the gold appeared, the father woke up—strongly suspecting that a human had been God's instrument in saving his two older daughters—and chased after Nicholas. Catching up to him, the father knelt and tried to kiss Nicholas's feet, but Nicholas stopped him, saying that God alone should be thanked for the three bags of gold. Joe L. Wheeler writes, "Gradually, the people of that region became aware that among them was a selfless human being who went about doing good and directing all praise and gratitude to God." (Saint Nicholas, p. 15).

When Nicholas had given all his inherited wealth away, he entered the monastery of Sion, near the town of Myra. Eventually, he became abbot (the leader of the monastery), and later, he became a priest and the bishop of Myra.

This holiday season, let us be blessings to others. Let us give generously, not expecting anything in return, for all that we call our own is truly God's. When we give to others, let us do so joyfully and in secret.

Peace be with you,

*Pastor Jason*

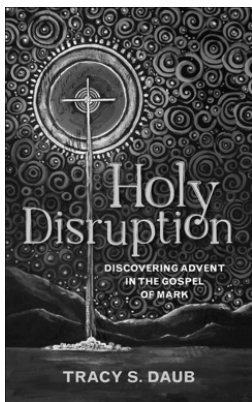
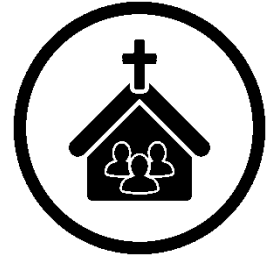
# Session Notes

At their November meeting, Session approved the following:

- Calling a Congregational meeting on December 11, 2022, following church to elect church officers.
- Entering the death of Mary Ross (10/27/22) into our church records.
- Sermons 4Kids as the curriculum for Sunday School.
- The Tuesday morning book club will operate under their own discretion.
- Mary Barr's writing class on Thursdays from 2-5PM in Nov/Dec.

## Notice of Congregational Meeting: December 11

All active members of the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood are asked to attend a congregational meeting immediately following worship on Sunday, December 11 to help us elect officers for 2023 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 the prior Friday 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 Bible Study

Pastor Jason will be leading an Advent study titled "Holy Disruption." *Holy Disruption* presents a fresh understanding of the holiness of Christmas grounded, not in a conventional cozy Christmas message, but through Mark's disquieting gospel which invites its readers to experience God's disruptive but transformative love for us and our world.

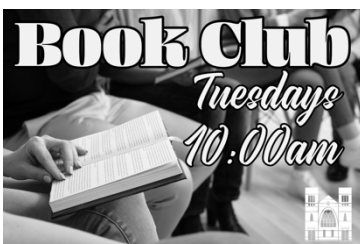
The group will meet on Thursdays during Advent, starting on **December 1 at 7:00PM**. We will meet in the Gathering Place but will also offer the opportunity to join via a Zoom link as we attempt a hybrid format. Those in the Zoom meeting will be projected on the screen and audio will play through the sound system in the Gathering Place so that all in attendance can interact in person and virtually. The Zoom link is posted on the website and will be sent in the weekly email to the congregation.

You can pick up a free copy of the book in the Church Office (suggested donation is \$10) or access a free eBook through Hoopla, a digital public library resource. If you have any questions, reach out to Pastor Jason ([pastorjason@fpcedgewood.org](mailto:pastorjason@fpcedgewood.org)).

## A Season of Giving

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 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. A list of needed items and ways to donate can be found on the church website at [fpcedgewood.org](http://fpcedgewood.org). **Donations must be received by Sunday, December 4** so that Jim and Lisa can drop off by MHY's December 5 deadline, allowing the volunteers and staff to organize and distribute accordingly.



## Tuesday Book Club

Our Tuesday Morning Book Group continues to meet each Tuesday at 10:00AM at the Apessos home, three blocks from the church, 361 Maple Avenue. They have just wrapped up their discussion of the book *A Man Called Peter* and have begun *In the Manger* by Max Lucada. Now would be a great time to join if you have been considering it!

## No Place Like Home for the Holidays...at FPCE!

If you like holiday music, then you will want to spend your weekends right here at "home" in your Community Church! The FPCE sanctuary will host several musical groups throughout the weekends in December:

**Saturday, December 3** at 7:30PM is the annual Edgewood Symphony Orchestra kick-off to the holiday season. "Holiday Serenade" will feature new and old holiday favorites including, of course, Leroy Anderson's "Sleigh Ride." Tickets: \$15/\$10 at [edgewoodsymphony.org](http://edgewoodsymphony.org)

**Saturday, December 10** at 4:30PM we welcome back the Munhall Community Band for their Holiday Concert. Our own FPCE Sanctuary choir and the Anne Ashley United Methodist Church choir will join the band on a few pieces as well! MCB is a non-profit community volunteer concert band dedicated to providing life-long education and enjoyment through instrumental music, serving the Steel Valley and surrounding Pittsburgh Communities. Tickets: Free/\$5 donation at [munhallband.org](http://munhallband.org)

**Saturday, December 17** at 11:00AM the Steranka Flute Studio presents the students of Sarah Steranka as they perform flute solos in their annual winter recital. Attendance is free and open to the public! Short reception to follow.

**Saturday, December 17** at 7:30PM and  
**Sunday, December 18** at 3:00PM

the mixed barbershop chorus Vocal Confluence will present their show "A VC Holiday." Founded in 1997 as the Steel City Harmonizers, Vocal Confluence proudly represents the Pittsburgh Metro Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society. They rehearse weekly at FPCE on Monday evenings. Tickets: Pay what you can at [vocalconfluence.org](http://vocalconfluence.org)


**Sunday, December 18** at 11:00AM the North Hills Singers will visit Edgewood to perform as part of the FPCE worship service and in a mini-concert immediately following. The North Hills Singers is the auditioned chamber choir from North Hills High School in Ross Township, where FPCE Minister of Music Shaun Cloonan is the choral director. All are welcome to attend the service and mini-concert.

**MUSIC** *Ministry*


*Holiday Serenade*

**December 3, 2022, 7:30 p.m.**  
First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood

Lucas Richman Hanukkah Festival Overture  
Ottorino Respighi Ancient Airs and Dances  
Sergei Prokofiev Troika from Lt. Kije Suite  
Rimsky-Korsakov The Snow Maiden Suite  
Randol Bass The Night Before Christmas  
Demarcus Cooper, Narrator  
Leroy Anderson Sleigh Ride



Demarcus Cooper



*Holiday*  
CONCERT

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EDGEWOOD  
120 E SWISSVALE AVE  
PITTSBURGH, PA 15218

**DECEMBER 10, 2022**  
**4:30PM - 6:30PM**

Scan Here for Tickets  
**FREE!**  
(\$5 Donation Appreciated)



Munhall Community Band  
[www.munhallband.org](http://www.munhallband.org)  
FEATURING THE CHOIRS OF  
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH OF EDGEWOOD  
AND  
ANNE ASHLEY MEMORIAL  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF  
MUNHALL



**VOCAL CONFLUENCE**  
PROUDLY PRESENTS





**A VC Holiday**



CELEBRATE THE SEASON WITH PITTSBURGH'S  
ALL-VOICE BARBERSHOP CHORUS

Saturday, December 17th at 7:30 PM  
Sunday, December 18th at 3:00 PM

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EDGEWOOD  
120 E. SWISSVALE AVE, PITTSBURGH PA 15218

NO TICKETS REQUIRED - PAY WHAT YOU CAN

EVENTS     DONATE



[WWW.VOCALCONFLUENCE.ORG](http://WWW.VOCALCONFLUENCE.ORG)

## Seeking Nominations

Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for the Board of Deacons, Session, an Auditor and Alternate Auditor, as well as the Nominating Committee for 2024. Anyone interested in these openings, please contact Marcia Haley, Lisa Segedy, or John Foster.

## Financial Update

After more than 20 years of dedicated service, Tom Ochs has announced that he is retiring from the position of church treasurer. Session is looking for his 2023 replacement. Anyone interested in finding out more about the position, please contact Tom.



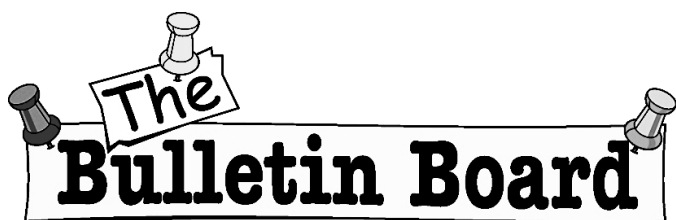
## Shady Side Academy Food Pantry Donation

Our annual food donation to our food pantry and WCM and others from Shady Side Academy 2<sup>nd</sup> graders and their teachers was again a HUGE success. The bus load arrived Friday morning, Nov. 18 and the students/teachers started their routine of unloading their bus and loading our shelves. Deacon Rick Masten then talked with them and explained how their generosity will help so many people who are in need. Their collection will be divided between our food pantry, WCM and other local charities.

In addition to our food pantry, we are working to set up “**Our Little Pantry**” at entrances to the church for those who might be in need of food. We invite anyone to take what they need or give any extra they have. We hope making the food pantry more accessible to those who use our building throughout the week will help us live out our mission better—to love our neighbors well.

## On the Christian Life: What does it mean to be Presbyterian?

Our new member and “old” member class will be starting at the end of February! Yes, this seems far away, but it will be here before we know it. If you are interested in learning more about what it means to follow Christ and what it means to do that at a place like FPCE, come join us for several weeks of conversation. Anyone and everyone are invited to join us—not just those interested in baptism or membership. The class will start on February 26 at 12PM in the Lounge, and new members will be baptized and/or accepted during our Easter worship on April 9. Please talk to Pastor Jason if you are interested—[pastorjason@fpcedgewood.org](mailto:pastorjason@fpcedgewood.org).



*Sharing the Joys & Concerns  
of the FPCE Family*

- On November 19th, Ruth Miller's granddaughter Alyssa and Eddie Staylor were married in Baltimore, MD. It was a beautiful ceremony in a Greek Orthodox church and a great reception/party. "I now have two grandsons-in-law and am looking forward to more great-grandbabies!!!"
- A huge thank-you to Rick Masten and his friend Tom, who welcomed the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes from Shady Side Academy when they brought in their food drive. Rick also cleaned out the food pantry before to eliminate outdated items so shelves could be restocked.
- Rick Masten and his friend, Tom almost single handedly decorated the sanctuary after their already busy morning of Shady Side Academy food distribution. These 2 gentlemen are a blessing to FPCE and our membership!
- A big thank you to our resident craft wizard, Lorraine Douthett, for creating beautiful new Advent banners for the sanctuary. The ones we've been using for years that were made by the membership were starting to fall apart after being repaired several times so Lorraine decided it was time for something new. They have a stained glass design for each of the blue and pink candles.

If you have news you would like to share in this section or a prayer request you would like to have read during our worship service, please contact Pastor Jason or Judy in the office. Additionally, let them know if you would like the request to be shared with our Prayer Warriors, who pray with intention for those requests weekly.



## An Update from WCM

On behalf of Wilkinsburg Community Ministry, we thank you for previous gifts to provide nutritious food for our neighbors in Wilkinsburg, Edgewood, Swissvale and Homewood. WCM distributes approximately 500 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables per day to 45-60 families who visit our store front pantry; in addition, our neighbors can select various canned, dried and frozen items, including vegetables, soups, beans and rice, and frozen or refrigerated meats, cheeses, milk, and eggs. We also usually have various types of bread and the occasional sweet treats.

Our neighbors find it increasingly difficult to meet their nutrition, housing and security needs. This is not simply a local crisis. You've no doubt heard that the numbers of families living with food insecurity have increased during the health and economic crisis. Experts estimate that 50 million families in the country are food insecure now: that number includes about 30 million children and another 40 million seniors. A combination of inflation and price gouging have had a long-term negative impact on the nation's food systems.

In Fall 2022, WCM initiated a new project which brings food to local neighborhoods. In partnership with the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, we have a 27 foot step truck which will, eventually, have 5-6 stops a week at several locations to serve neighbors who cannot come to our store front pantry during regular hours (9-1 M-F). Presently "We Share Food" is operating at two locations in Wilkinsburg; we plan to expand to a third location in November, and two more in January 2023. At each stop we are distributing about 1500 pounds of food in 3-4 hours.

WCM's additional programs specifically focus on Wilkinsburg children. Operation Backpack, an annual event to provide backpacks to school children. They use these to carry their books during the week and to take home food for the weekend. The Medicine Way Garden has evolved into a children's learning center focused on how food grows, composting, pollination, and gardening. Our partnership with the childcare center across the street offers an outdoor space for children to experiment with gardening, enjoy getting their fingers into dirt, and watch worms, fish, pollinators and birds. Both programs encourage children to think about nutrition and understand the food chain in which we all live.

There are several ways you can participate in the WCM mission:

**\*We always seek volunteers to help at both the store front pantry and the mobile pantry. Volunteers typically work 2-4 hour shifts helping people make their food choices, stocking the shelves, and processing donations of food. Some lifting is involved.**

**\*Some volunteers host small neighborhood "missions" at which they gather 7-10 friends to collect canned and packaged goods. One of our staff or board members is happy to come to these events to share the word on food (in)security in our county.**

**\*Financial support is always welcome!** There are several ways to make a gift.

1. You can send a check to Wilkinsburg Community Ministry, 702 Wood Street, Pittsburgh PA 15221
2. You can use the "Donate Now" button to make a gift through Network for Good.
3. You can participate in "Giving Tuesday" on November 29, 2022, by going to our website and clicking on the Giving Tuesday button!
4. We also accept gifts of publicly stocks and bonds. If you'd like to make such a gift, please contact Ruth Kittner at [ruthk@wcm15221.org](mailto:ruthk@wcm15221.org) and she will help you with account numbers.
5. We can also accept such long-term gifts as assigned insurance policies, residual legacies, and other types of financial planning instruments. Again, please contact Ruth for more information.

Your support of this mission is greatly appreciated!

Blessings!

*Ruth A Kittner*

Executive Director

Wilkinsburg Community Ministry

702-704 Wood Street

Pittsburgh PA 15221

# December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 2:00 Writing Class 3:45 Flute (CE) 7:00 SAA (L) 7:00 Milepost6 (B) 7:00 Advent Study	2 4:15 Flute (CE) 8:30 AA (SR)	3 7:30 ESO Concert 8:30 AA (SR)
4 <i>Communion</i> 9:30 Choir (S) 11:00 Worship (S) 12:00 Fellowship	5 6:30 Scouts (SR) 7:00 VC (S)	6 10:00 Book Club	7	8 2:00 Writing Class 3:45 Flute (CE) 7:00 SAA (L) 7:00 Milepost6 (B) 7:00 Advent Study	9 4:15 Flute (CE) 6:00 MCB Reh (S) 8:30 AA (SR)	10 4:30 MCB Concert 8:30 AA (SR)
11 9:30 Choir (S) 11:00 Worship (S) <b>12:00 Cong. Mtg.</b> 12:30 Fellowship	12 6:30 Scouts (SR) 7:00 VC (S)	13 10:00 Book Club <b>7:00 Session (L)</b>	14	15 2:00 Writing Class 3:45 Flute (CE) 7:00 SAA (L) 7:00 Milepost6 (B) 7:00 Advent Study	16 4:15 Flute (CE) 7:00 VC Reh. (S) 8:30 AA (SR)	17 11:00 Flute Recital 7:00 VC Concert 8:30 AA (SR)
18 9:30 Choir (S) 11:00 Worship (S) 12:00 NH Singers 12:30 Fellowship 3:00 VC Concert	19 6:30 Scouts (SR) 7:00 VC (S)	20 10:00 Book Club	21 7:00 Blue Xmas at Waverly Presby.	22 2:00 Writing Class 7:00 SAA (L) 7:00 Milepost6 (B) 7:00 Advent Study	23 8:30 AA (SR)	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 8:00 Service (S) 8:30 AA (SR)
25 CHRISTMAS DAY 11:00 Online Worship Service (Facebook and YouTube)	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27	28	29 2:00 Writing Class 3:45 Flute (CE) 7:00 SAA (L) 7:00 Milepost6 (B)	30 8:30 AA (SR)	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE 8:30 AA (SR)

Meeting Locations: Book Club – Apossos Home | Milepost6 – Basement Band Room | Advent Study, Fellowship – Gathering Place | Flute – C.E. Office  
Session, Writing Class, SAA – Lounge | ESO, VC, MCB, Choir, Worship – Sanctuary | AA, Scouts – Social Room

“The story of Jesus bringing peace to the world is not a sentimental Christmas feel-good story of peace but a genuine peace that is hard won and often disruptive.” (p 60)



An Advent Series Inspired by *Holy Disruption*:  
*Discovering Advent in the Gospel of Mark*, by Tracy S. Daub

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



“The coming of Jesus into our lives offers us a home of meaning, belonging and acceptance that accompanies us wherever life’s journey takes us.” (p. 75)



An Advent Series Inspired by *Holy Disruption*:  
*Discovering Advent in the Gospel of Mark*, by Tracy S. Daub

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT





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. You may also email the information to Judy at [office@fpcedgewood.org](mailto:office@fpcedgewood.org). **Deadline is Sunday, December 4, 2022.**

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.** *(You may also email your order and pay using the donate button online.)*

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.