

## How do we make sense of the New Year?

*Excerpted from a 2017 post on Facebook by Parker Palmer*

This “New Year” thing is a curious fiction, isn’t it? The planet on which we’ve hitched a ride has been wheeling through space a lot longer than 2,018 years. And the hoopla we make at midnight on Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> is a tad over the top for one more tick of the clock.

But this annual ritual allows us to imagine that maybe, just maybe, we’re on the threshold of something new and better. Some of our imaginings might come true—depending on what we do.

Once again, I’ll take a pass on making New Year’s resolutions. Instead, I’ll take Rilke’s famous advice about “living the questions,” and carry into the New Year a few of the wonderings that Anne Hillman’s poem evokes in me. Call it “FIVE QUESTIONS FOR CROSSING THE THRESHOLD”:

- How can I let go of my need for fixed answers in favor of aliveness?
- What is my next challenge in daring to be human—in personal, relational, and political terms?
- How can I open myself to the beauty of nature and human nature?
- Who or what do I need to learn to love next? And next? And next?
- What is the new creation that wants to be born in and through me?

We look with uncertainty to the year ahead. But if we wrap our lives around life-giving questions—and live our way into their answers a bit more every day—the better world we want and need is more likely to come into being.

HAPPY NEW YEAR, everyone! May [2023] be a year of Light and Life for you and yours. And may we help make it so for others with whom we share this ride around the sun.

### *We look with uncertainty...*

We look with uncertainty beyond the old choices for clear-cut answers to a softer, more permeable aliveness which is every moment at the brink of death; for something new is being born in us if we but let it.

We stand at a new doorway, awaiting that which comes... daring to be human creatures, vulnerable to the beauty of existence. Learning to love.

~ Anne Hillman

## January 2023 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.*

**January 1:** Celebrate New Year’s Day with Lessons and Carols! (No communion this week)

**January 8:** Epiphany of the Lord; Matthew 2:1-12; We will celebrate Communion together; New Church officers will be installed.

**Saturday, January 14:** Interfaith Vigil for Peace at 2 PM at FPCE. Local community groups will be offering gun violence resources before and after. More info to come!

**January 15:** Baptism of the Lord; Matthew 3:13-17; We will celebrate Communion together

**January 22:** Third Sunday after Epiphany Emerging Worship; Matthew 4:12-23. Congregational meeting follows

**January 29:** Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany; Matthew 5:1-12





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

Office & Cleaning Manager  
**Judy Mysels**  
 office@fpcedgewood.org

Building Manager  
**Rob Mysels**  
 building@fpcedgewood.org

Minister of Music  
**Shaun Cloonan**  
 music@fpcedgewood.org

Pianist  
**Sunny Sakai**  
 sunnysakai4@gmail.com

**LOVE GOD**  
**EACH OTHER**  
**OUR NEIGHBORS**

## Annual Congregational Meeting: January 22

All active members of the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood are asked to attend the annual Congregational Meeting immediately following worship on Sunday, January 22. The purpose of this meeting is to receive and review the Annual Report and its reports from various committees and to review the final budget approved by Session. Additionally, the remaining slate of nominees not yet secured at the December meeting will be elected to their offices and positions on Session, Deacons, the 2023 nominating committee, and auditors. Please join us as we take care of the business involved in continuing our ministry at FPCE. As required by our FPCE bylaws, this announcement and official notice of the meeting will be made from the pulpit 2 weeks prior to the meeting and printed in the worship bulletin.

**Committee reports are due by Monday, January 9.** For reference, copies of last year's reports were mailed/emailed to committee chairs. If there are any questions or concerns, call the Church Office or email office@fpcedgewood.org.

## Prayer Chain

Did you know that we have a prayer chain ministry? We have a dedicated group of people who regularly lift up prayers of supplication and thanksgiving. We pass along prayer requests to the group through email or a phone call depending on the preferred method of contact by each prayer chain member. Please let us know if you have any prayer requests, joys, or if you would like to be added to the list by emailing Michelle Santo at cshell73@yahoo.com or call/text Pastor Jason at 412-951-7339.



## Blessing Bags: January 15

FPCE is going to be building Blessing Bags on **January 15** following the church service. These bags will be available for anyone to take and pass out to those in need. If you would like to make a financial donation, please do so by January 8 or consider dropping off requested items (see list below) before January 15. If you have any questions please email Tyler McGuigan, mcguigantylers@yahoo.com

Items needed: applesauce, granola bars, crackers, tuna packets, bottled water, socks, plastic, forks/spoons, toothpaste, toothbrush, mouthwash, comb, wet wipes, Chapstick, small packs of tissues, hand sanitizer.



## On the Christian Life: FPCE Membership Class

Our new member and “old” member class will be starting at the end of February! 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.

Membership isn’t about believing all the “right” things but committing to community, love, peace, and justice in light of God’s grace.

The class will start on February 26<sup>th</sup> at 12 PM in the Lounge, and new members will be baptized and/or accepted during our Easter worship on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Please talk to Pastor Jason if you are interested—  
pastorjason@fpcedgewood.org.

### SCHEDULE

Feb 26	God’s Mission
Mar 5	Who is Jesus?
Mar 12	What is the Church?
Mar 19	What else do(n’t) we believe?
Mar 26	How do we live?
Apr 2	Other Questions/Session joins
Apr 9	Members baptized/accepted



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



## What do I need to believe?

I find it fascinating that the Presbyterian Church (USA) website has a page titled “What Presbyterians Don’t Believe.” They wrote the article because many of us have picked up ideas from “notions floating about in the culture at large.” In a pluralistic, multi-denominational world that is deeply connected through technology, we are constantly confronted with competing beliefs.

What are some things we (as a denomination) don’t believe? Salvation by good works, reincarnation, transubstantiation, purgatory, and the inerrancy of Scripture. We don’t believe in those things, but I’m sure you’ve heard of them before.

In the Western world, we emphasis orthodoxy—right belief. Do you believe the *right* things? What will happen if you don’t? Will you be *saved* if you believe the *wrong* things?

We’re anxious about believing the right things, but here’s the thing about being Presbyterian: we *don’t* need to believe the right things to experience salvation.

One of our core beliefs is that we don’t choose Jesus as our savior; God chooses us.

When we perform baptisms, we remember that before we were born, God poured out grace on all of us. We didn’t choose it. Paul comforts those in Ephesus saying, “God chose us in Christ to be holy and blameless in God’s presence before the creation of the world. God destined us to be his adopted children through Jesus Christ because of his love” (Eph. 1:4-5a, CEB).

For too long, we have only emphasized orthodoxy—right belief. We need to balance the scales. There’s another side to the Christian faith: *orthopraxy*—right practice.

As Western Christians, we like to get in our heads and focus on beliefs and creeds and doctrine. But the good news is that we don’t need to believe in one perfect set of beliefs—*orthodoxy*—to

experience salvation. Salvation is a gift from God that we have already been given, and we must respond! That’s *orthopraxy*—right practice, right response. How are we responding to God’s grace?

What does Jesus call us to do? To love God and love our neighbors.

As James writes, “Anyone who sets himself up as ‘religious’ by talking a good game is self-deceived. This kind of religion is hot air and only hot air. Real religion, the kind that passes muster before God the Father, is this: Reach out to the homeless and loveless in their plight, and guard against corruption from the godless world” (1:26-27).

Take comfort in your salvation—that God loves you as you are—no matter what you believe or don’t believe. God loves you as you are. So go and seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Believe that you are God’s beloved and respond—care for the orphans, widows, houseless, and vulnerable around you.

And yes, I’m referring to our sometimes hotly-debated belief of predestination. I’ll leave you with this statement on predestination from the *Presbyterian Handbook*: “In a world where some people want to declare who is saved and who is going to hell, one way to reaffirm that only God knows the answer is to say, ‘God has predestined, or decided that already. Let’s assume we’re all chosen and love others’” (123).

If you’re curious to learn more about what “being Presbyterian” means (or what it doesn’t mean), please join us for our Winter class **On the Christian Life: What does it mean to be Presbyterian?** starting on Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>.

Peace be with you,  
Pastor Jason



### **Tuesday Book Club**

Now that the holidays are over, the weekly Book Club will be starting a new book titled "Man Seeks God" by Eric Weiner. It's a great time to join! This group meets at 10:00 AM 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 led by Tim Hoffman will resume on January 11. Topics discussed will be from the series "What the Bible Says About..." The Zoom link is available on the website and in the weekly email updates sent out to church members. No password is needed, just the link. Tim will let you in from the waiting room as you join. Come and join the discussion on Wednesday nights at 7:30pm 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!

## **Session Notes**

At their December 13, 2022 meeting, the Session of FPCE voted to approve:

- Use of the Sanctuary, February 5, 3PM-6PM for a concert and meditation for Zen Shakuhachi (bass bassoon flute) by Cornelius Boot.
- Continuation of the Topical Bible Study – Topic of the Day, led by Tim Hoffman.
- Communion dates for 2023.

### **Christmas Collection Drive Thanks**

A huge and hearty thank you to the many friends of MHY at FPCE for their many generous donations to help make the lives of the youth we serve so much better. Three carloads of usable treasures found their way up to Mars. FPCE was again the most generous donating congregation. We are blessed by your ongoing support.

*Jim Segedy, Board of Directors  
MHY Family Services (formerly, Mars Home for Youth)*

### **Deacon News**

Harvest Baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas poinsettias were delivered to our friends of the church in November and December. May God be with you through the New Year and fill your life with comfort, love, and cheer. May this day and the days ahead hold many blessings for you and yours. Happy New Year!



### **Seeking Nominations**

The Nominating Committee is still accepting nominations for the Auditor and Alternate Auditor, as well as the 2023 Nominating Committee. The auditor's primary responsibility is to go through the church financial records with our treasurer to make sure that everything is in order. Nominating Committee members are charged with seeking out leaders in the congregation to fill roles on the boards. Anyone interested in these openings, please contact Marcia Haley, Lisa Segedy, or John Foster.

# MUSIC *Ministry*

What a whirlwind of activity December was musically at FPCE! If holiday music was your thing, we certainly had it pretty much every weekend. Here's a recap and a bunch of thank you's:

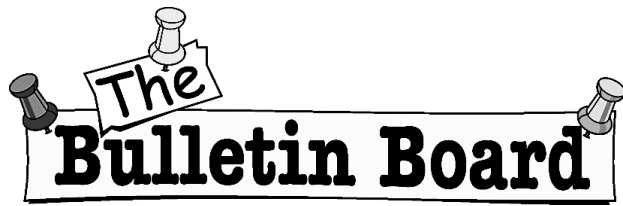
- The Edgewood Symphony once again held their annual holiday concert on the first Saturday, finishing out the evening activities of Light Up Edgewood.
- The next week, we hosted and joined the Munhall Community Band for their Christmas Concert. Our Sanctuary Choir joined forces with the singers from Anne Ashley United Methodist Church of Munhall on the opening and closing songs of the concert. The podium was visited by 2 of our FPCE family members – Mandy Rineer is the assistant director of MCB and conducted a couple of pieces; and back for a famed appearance is our favorite SantaSeg (who also appeared the week before with the ESO!). Thanks to all of our choir members for giving of their time to attend the extra rehearsals and concert!
- Our busiest weekend by far was December 17-18. We held FOUR different musical events in a 48 hour period in our sanctuary! Our resident flute instructor, Sarah Steranka held her flute studio recital on Saturday morning. Later that evening Vocal Confluence presented their holiday barbershop show and were joined by the Renaissance City Choir. Sunday morning was the most special to me personally as for the first time since 2018 I was able to bring my North Hills Singers group to Edgewood. We sang a combined anthem with NH and FPCE, then after the service performed our secular holiday set. Our gracious Sanctuary Choir members hosted a yummy lunch following the mini-concert. Thanks to all who helped by preparing or donating tasty treats for my “kids.” They raved about the service, the food, and your hospitality. Vocal Confluence was setting up for their second show as we were heading to the bus, wrapping up the crazy music-filled weekend!
- Sunny Sakai and David Falk represented our music ministry at the Waverly Presbyterian Church's Blue Christmas service. Thanks for giving of your time and talents to make that service meaningful.
- Christmas Eve we were treated to lovely flute music to accompany our candlelight service as Sarah Steranka joined us to share her gift in performances with Sunny and the choir as well as solo.
- Thank you to Sunny and daughter Inori Sakai for their contributions to our “Christmas Morning from Home” presentation online. Sunny wowed us with one of her jazz improvisations on “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” and closing the service was the piano and violin duet “Dear Jesus” that ends with a phrase of “Happy Birthday” to our newborn savior!

I'm grateful to all who have stepped in and helped wherever necessary as we navigate this “ministry of music hospitality” that we've begun over the past year or so by opening our doors to so many musical organizations. We've learned a good bit about parking, coordination of set-up/tear-down, and keeping lines of communication open so that everyone feels welcome while enjoying our beautiful physical space. I've spoken with each group and they all love performing at FPCE and have shared their excitement about planning future concerts with us as the host. Some of those dates are already on our calendar for 2023.

I'm looking forward to things calming down just a little bit as we enter into our traditionally pretty quiet and routine time of January/February in the church year. Choir resumes on January 8, our Worship Ensemble joins us again on January 22, and then before we know it we'll be observing Ash Wednesday and making our journey to the cross. But before we do all of that, let's enjoy the birth of the newborn King with Lessons & Carols and an Epiphany celebration this month!

Happy New Year and Blessings to you all!

Shaun Cloonan  
*Minister of music*



*Sharing the Joys & Concerns  
of the FPCE Family*

- To Ruth Miller, Elaine Cloonan, Flo Raisig, and Lorraine Douthett for arranging the Christmas poinsettias in the sanctuary
- Thanksgiving for all involved in the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services who made it so special
- For those dealing with depression, anxiety, addiction, and mental health issues that may have been triggered by the holidays
- Traveling mercies for all who were visiting family and friends

## January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <i>HAPPY 2023!</i> 9:30 Choir (S) 11:00 Worship (S) 12:15 Fellowship	2 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED 6:30 Scouts (SR)	3 10:00 Book Club 7:00 ESO (S)	4	5 2:00 Writing Class 3:45 Flute (CE) 7:00 SAA (L) 7:00 Milepost6 (B)	6 5:00 Flute (L) 8:30 AA (SR)	7 8:30 AA (SR)
8 <i>Epiphany Sunday</i> 9:30 Choir (S) 11:00 Worship (S) <b>Communion</b> 12:15 Fellowship	9 DEADLINE FOR REPORTS 6:30 Scouts (SR) 7:00 VC (S)	10 10:00 Book Club 7:00 Session (GP) 7:00 ESO (S)	11 7:30 Bible Study (Zoom)	12 2:00 Writing Class 3:45 Flute (CE) 7:00 SAA (L) 7:00 Milepost6 (B)	13 5:00 Flute (L) 8:30 AA (SR)	14 <b>2:00 Peace Vigil</b> 8:30 AA (SR)
15 <i>Baptism of Lord</i> 9:30 Choir (S) 11:00 Worship (S) <b>Communion</b> 12:15 Fellowship & <b>Blessing Bags</b>	16 6:30 Scouts (SR) 7:00 VC (S)	17 10:00 Book Club 7:00 ESO (S)	18 7:30 Bible Study (Zoom)	19 2:00 Writing Class 3:45 Flute (CE) 7:00 SAA (L) 7:00 Milepost6 (B)	20 5:00 Flute (L) 8:30 AA (SR)	21 8:30 AA (SR)
22 9:30 Worship Ens. 11:00 Emerging Worship (S) <b>12:15 Cong. Mtg. Luncheon</b>	23 6:30 Scouts (SR) 7:00 VC (S)	24 10:00 Book Club 7:00 ESO (S)	25 7:30 Bible Study (Zoom)	26 2:00 Writing Class 3:45 Flute (CE) 7:00 SAA (L) 7:00 Milepost6 (B)	27 5:00 Flute (L) 8:30 AA (SR)	28 8:30 AA (SR)
29 9:30 Choir (S) 11:00 Worship (S) 12:15 Fellowship	30 6:30 Scouts (SR) 7:00 VC (S)	31 10:00 Book Club 7:00 ESO (S)	Meeting Locations			
			Book Club – Apeessos Home AA – Social Room Vocal Confluence & ESO – Sanctuary Milepost6 – Basement Band Room		Flute Lessons – CE Office Session, SAA – Gathering Place Choir, Ensemble, Worship – Sanctuary Scouts – Social Room	

E	F	R	A	N	K	I	N	C	E	N	S	E	D
G	P	R	J	D	I	S	R	A	E	L	T	C	R
V	L	I	X	L	Q	J	R	L	I	G	H	T	E
D	J	G	P	C	Z	Q	T	V	B	S	M	W	A
A	Z	N	B	H	F	H	C	B	V	O	A	P	M
R	T	S	E	Z	A	R	E	U	W	B	G	H	P
K	U	H	K	Q	G	N	E	R	I	C	I	B	Q
N	E	E	P	I	H	O	Y	F	O	D	P	P	Y
E	A	P	S	I	P	Q	L	Z	U	D	S	C	A
S	L	H	T	L	B	R	L	D	S	G	V	S	P
S	L	E	A	I	M	Y	R	R	H	R	E	O	D
H	N	R	R	I	B	R	B	S	Y	K	G	E	X
R	J	D	N	Q	O	F	C	C	H	R	I	S	T
B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	P	T	A	M	A

EPIPHANY  
DARKNESS  
STAR  
CHRIST  
LIGHT

BETHLEHEM  
SHEPHERD  
ISRAEL  
HEROD  
MAGI

GOLD  
FRANKINCENSE  
MYRRH  
DREAM  
REFUGEE



First Presbyterian Church of  
**EDGEWOOD**  
*The Community Church*  
120 East Swissvale Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15218

*Happy New Year*



**January 14**  
**Vigil for Peace**

**January 15**  
**Building Blessing Bags**



**January 22**  
**Congregational Meeting**