

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

January-February 2020

PASTOR'S **POINT OF VIEW**



Michael P. Rucker
Pastor

Here are some thoughts from the Apostle Paul that stop me dead in my tracks:

“Everything is yours, including the world, life, death, the present, and the future.

Everything belongs to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

Think of us as servants of Christ who have been given the work of explaining God's mysterious ways.”

(I Corinthians 3: 21 – 4:1)

Really? Me? Explain the mysterious ways of God?

I have too much reading to do. There are times when Heather will send me an article or meditation that impressed her, so she passes it on, hoping I will enjoy it, as well. A day or so later she will ask, “Michael, did you read the meditation I sent? What did you think?” Too

often my response is, “I saw it. But I only read the title and a paragraph or two. It was interesting – thanks!” But I never *really* read it. I certainly did not reflect on it for long. I have too much reading to do.

I believe all of us will agree that we live in a culture where too much information comes to us way too fast. It is said, “This is the age of *raplexity*; *rapid and complex change*.” Yet, the mysterious ways of God that we are tasked with explaining, do not reveal themselves rapidly

The hopeful promise Paul has for us is that everything belongs to us and we belong to Christ. The great challenge for us is to carve out time every single day to live, move, and have our being at a slower pace, in a more reflective, prayerful, and quiet way. **“Be still...and know that I am God.”** That is the pathway to understanding the mysterious ways of God.

Brothers and sisters, the world is coming at us from every angle and is coming at us fast; can we pause long enough to really become still? Will we take the time to prayerfully ponder the mysterious ways of God? That is a New Year's resolution all of us can make.

Take time to be holy.

Pastor Michael

WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

January 12

Why was Jesus baptized anyway? Is it that important? It is. Each one of us belongs to two families; one by birth, one by adoption. Both make their mark on us.

January 19

We will recall and honor the life of one of Christianity's great missionary heroes – Martin Luther King, Jr. My O my, we need to hear his voice again during these troubled times. Through him, God gave us a dream. We ignore that dream to our peril. This Sunday will be an Emerging Worship celebration.

January 26

Our life has a purpose...no matter how old or young; whether we are in college, in our jobs, or in skilled nursing care facility, our life has meaning and purpose. Our Annual Congregational Meeting will follow our Classical style worship service.

(Cont'd. p. 2)

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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.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

February 2

It is confirmed – this is Scout Sunday. We have been in wonderful mutually supportive relationship with Boy Scout Troop # 23 for years. On this day, we will worship together. The service will include the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

February 9

These mid-February days, when the winter truly can be bleak, God rescues flickering flames and gives us a zest for living. Light and salt – that is who we are.

February 16

Once again Jesus takes something that is well-known and familiar to us, turns it inside out and upside down, and we and our lives are enriched because of it.

February 23

In spite of the cynical words of sceptics, we have faith in God, trusting that the presence of God is not smoke and mirrors nor a crutch for the weak. It is real. It builds strength and enables us to stand strong.

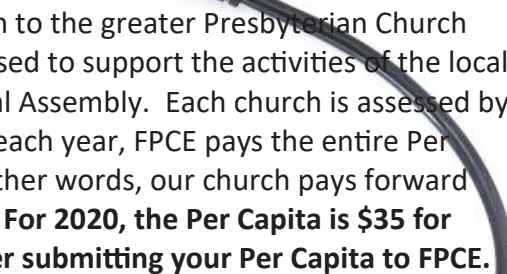
BUILDING RENOVATION FUND REPORT

The Building Renovation Fund was initiated in 2017 with a three year time span to raise money for renovations that resulted in replacement of the steam furnace with ductless and forced air units. The three year fundraising goal was \$100,000. As 12/31/2019 we have received \$101,232.33. The sources of the funds are as follows:

Congregation giving	\$74,669.33	Bequests	\$26,000
Sunday School	314.00		
Progressive Dinner	150.00	Total	\$101,232.33
Memorial	100.00		

Thanks to everyone who was able to participate in this fund raising project .

STEWARDSHIP



Per Capita connects our church to the greater Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA). The funds are used to support the activities of the local Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly. Each church is assessed by the number of members, and each year, FPCE pays the entire Per Capita to PCUSA upfront. In other words, our church pays forward the amount for each member. **For 2020, the Per Capita is \$35 for each member. Please consider submitting your Per Capita to FPCE.**

Blessings,
Paul Otori, Stewardship
Pastor Michael

Our Church Community



SESSION NOTES...

As a way to share the life of our church with visitors, it was suggested that we ask them to fill out the blue pew cards with their names and addresses. This will enable them to receive our newsletter. Session will also reinstitute our Parish Life Committee.

PARISH LIFE

As a way of re-connecting with members of our congregation, we are reinstituting the Parish Life Committee. At our last session meeting, Judy Mysels volunteered to head the committee with help from Rhonda Apessos, Nancy Ernst and also Mary Ross. Anyone else interested? These are some of our initial ideas:

- Have gone through membership directory and have some names of those who we haven't seen in a while and will send notes or make calls.
- Would like feedback on an idea of moving coffee into the sanctuary before and during service. Ideas right now have the location at the back of the sanctuary where the Deacons sit. Coffee, hot water for tea with cups with lids for those who would like to partake? Lorraine would still do fellowship (maybe the first Sunday of the month?)



ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2019 are due **January 20** – session committees, Deacons, Financials, P.W., etc. Have received reports from Deacon financial, Music, Stewardship, Nominating, FROGS. Last year's reports were emailed a few weeks ago for reference. Questions, concerns regarding the Annual Report...call 412/241-4613 or email: office@fpcedgewood.org

FPCE YEAR END FINANCIAL REPORT

The budget for 2019 had a negative balance with expenses exceeding income by \$14,777.28. It is a pleasure to report that congregation donations totaled \$130,185.19 in 2019, compared to \$115,000 in 2018, and combined with expenses below budget there was a surplus of \$4,659.46. There were several larger donations in December that helped income exceed budget.

Expenses included a \$24,000 roof repair that was reduced by a Pittsburgh History and Landmarks grant of \$10,000 (thanks to Tim McKee's effort).

Utility costs were below the reduced budget amount due to the new HVAC equipment.

As we move forward in 2020, we should be thankful for good financial results in 2019.

Tom Ochs

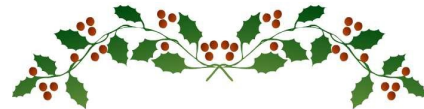
December 31, 2019



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DOUGLASS SCHOLARSHIP:

Thank you from the Deacons to the two church members who contributed to the Melfard Douglass Scholarship fund in December. The fund is at \$960, \$40 short of our goal for an award this summer. Gifts to the fund can be made by check or cash using the pew envelopes; please indicate for "Deacons Scholarship". Thank you.



CHRISTMAS HAS JUST BEGUN

The feast of Epiphany brings the Christmas season to an end. But does Christmas really ever end? Read this litany called "The Mood of Christmas" composed by Howard Thurman, an African-American theologian, educator, and civil rights leader.

The Mood of Christmas

**When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among people,
to make music in the heart.**

LOOKING INTO 2020
IT WILL NOT BE THE SAME AS LAST YEAR

Not one of us can predict the future; yet all of us make plans for it. On December 31, 2019, I watched my sister pull out the 2020 planning calendar and begin circling certain dates and writing reminders on others. Many of us have done the same thing.

We do here at the church. Every year the leadership sits down with the church planning calendar and sets dates; religious dates like Ash Wednesday or Easter; dates for session and deacon meetings; dates for Presbyterian Women events, and dates for the FROGS after school program. Most often, each year's planning calendar is strikingly similar to the previous year's. But the year 2020 is going to be different.

- ◆ Pastor Michael is retiring on June 10, 2020.
- ◆ FPCE is no longer able to support a full time pastor.
- ◆ Our lovely, historic building is too big and expensive for us to maintain.
- ◆ We will need to pray more, listen to God and one another carefully
- ◆ Continue to love and support one another.

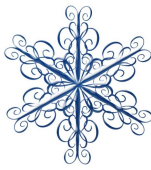


We do not have a plan in place as to how we will move forward. That will be on the top of the agenda at our January session meeting. Three decisions have been made. 1.) A representative from Pittsburgh Presbytery will come to our February session meeting. 2.) Pastor Michael's last Sunday will be June 7th. 3.) We have some funds set aside to provide some salary for another pastor.

There are many challenging decisions to be made. Will we share a pastor with another congregation? Will we hire someone part-time? Will we decide to merge with another congregation? Will we lease the building out to other organizations? Will we invite a developer to give us other avenues to take with regard to the facility? This is unnerving. FPCE has never done this before. Yet – this is an exciting time for the life of our congregation. What we do know is this: God will not leave us or forsake us. God will include us in his plan for this community. God has our back. May faith, hope and love abide with us as we plan for a very different 2020.



- Congratulations to Ethan Headlee and Elizabeth Carroll and big brother, Everett, on the birth of Maran.
- Thank you to Ruth Miller and Flo Raisig for arranging the poinsettias so beautifully in the sanctuary for Christmas.
- Thank you to Sunny and Inori Sakai for their music at the Christmas Eve service. We are truly blessed to have such fantastically talented musicians in our church family.
- Thank you to the few folks who helped with the Hanging of the Greens on November 24 and especially Rick Masten who did most of the "Unhanging of the Greens" on Jan. 5.
- Congratulations to Emily and Ryan Pocratsky and big brothers, Noah and Theodore on the birth of Meadow Elizabeth, born December 18, 2019.



JANUARY



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
				3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	8:30 AA
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship Unhanging of the Greens		10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA		3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	9:30 WCM Bd. Mtg. 8:30 AA
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship		10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 Session 7:00 AA		3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	8:30 AA
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	OFFICE CLOSED	10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA		3:45 FROGS	1-4PM Home School Co-Op (GP) 8:00 AA	8:30 AA
26	27	28	29	30	31	
9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Cong. Mtg.		10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA		3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	



FEBRUARY



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
						8:30 AA
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
SCOUT DAY/ SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY 9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship		10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA		3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	8:30 AA
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship		10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 Session Mtg 7:00 AA		NO FROGS	8:00 AA	8:30 AA
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	OFFICE CLOSED	10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA		3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	8:30 AA
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship		10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA	7:00 Ash Wednesday Service	3:45 FROGS	1-4 Home School Co-Op (GP) 8:00 AA	8:30 AA

JANUARY 2020 MUSIC MINISTRY NEWS

*“Green and silver red and gold
And the story born of old
Peace and love and hope abide
This Christmastide”*

Those words are the first and last verse of the choral anthem “This Christmastide (Jessye’s Carol)” I performed with the Symphonic Choir at North Hills this past December. It was dedicated to the incredibly talented opera singer Jessye Norman, who passed away a few months ago. I was able to use the piece as an opportunity to teach the students about this gifted performer who was such a force in the music world for so many years. We watched videos of Ms. Norman performing the song with various choirs and were amazed at her full, rich lower range as well as the versatility and lightness of her higher range within the same song. I also shared my first experience with the piece while I sang with the Duquesne University Chamber Singers in graduate school. It was the piece used at the end of the concert where alumni of the choir were invited to join in each December, connecting everyone through shared song.

Here at Edgewood, we’re fortunate to share in the gifts of our music ministry family as we seek to enrich the worship experience each Sunday. I’m grateful to the dedicated members of the Sanctuary Choir, Emerging Worship Ensemble, Mandy, and Sunny for their contributions, giving of their time and talents presenting anthems and praise songs. We were also fortunate on Christmas Eve to have a visit from our own daughter of the church, Inori Sakai, who beautifully played the violin during our candlelight and communion service. In a rare moment of shared experience, the whole congregation sat down after “Silent Night,” blowing out their candles and immersing themselves in the sounds of Inori and Sunny playing the Bach/Gounod “Ave Maria.” It was a special moment to end our service honoring the birth of the Christ Child.

By the time you receive this newsletter, we’ll officially be through the season of Christmastide (aka “the 12 days of Christmas” between Christmas and Epiphany) and heading into the period we call “ordinary time” in the church year. Schedules will calm down after the frenzied holiday season, decorations will come down, the temperatures will drop, and we’ll go about our routine of being the church. I invite you to remember the words above as we move through the beginning of 2020 together – “peace and love and hope abide.”

Happy New Year! *Shaun*

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

December was a short, but very busy, time for FROGS. We made ornaments to accompany the poinsettias the Deacons delivered, and we made other ornaments/cards for FROGS parents/etc. On Dec. 19, we played bingo with Christmas themed prizes.

Continued thanks for all the delicious donations of snacks and also monetary donations. Please continue to remember needed drinks, chips, cookies, etc. starting in January.

I am truly blessed to have THE BEST volunteers for our FROGS program. They are so loving and dedicated!

The FROGS program enjoyed the holiday break and resumed on January 7. May you all enjoy a healthy 2020!

Judy Mysels
FROGS Program Director



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