

# 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

**December 2019**

## PASTOR'S POINT OF VIEW



Michael P. Rucker  
Pastor

God is writing a new story for us. The title of the first chapter is Advent. I know, the title sounds familiar. Indeed, it is. Every year, on the last Sunday of November or the first Sunday of December, we celebrate the First Sunday of Advent. The beginning of a story that has been told for nearly 2000 years. How can the same words, describing the same events, written by the same prophets and gospels that we read every year become a new story? That is entirely up to each one of us.

In my younger, more vigorous, years, my wife and I made frequent trips to Mt. Katahdin in northern Maine. Mt Katahdin is the highest peak on the eastern coast of the United States. From its peak, one can catch very the first glimmer of the sunrise before sun's rays spread across the rest of the eastern coastland. The country surrounding Mt. Katahdin is a bit rugged. The camping more rustic. The hiking more demanding. There are many ways one can soak in the forested mountain mystery of Katahdin. One can simply drive the Perimeter Road which circles around the mount and take some

great photos. Or one can venture, taking a rather easy trail, to one of the camps at the base of the mountain. Or, one can climb one of the half dozen trails up to the summit. Each trail presents its own challenge, tests the climber in a different way, and rewards the person who makes it to the top with a different feeling of achievement. Same mountain, many views. Same peak, many paths.

That is the way Advent and Christmas can be for us. We are journeying to Bethlehem to witness again a miraculous birth of the one called Emmanuel. We can scurry through the stories, knowing we have heard it all before. Or we can slow down and put ourselves in the story. Or we can be a sceptic and try to rediscover why we should take the baby Jesus seriously. Or we can put ourselves in the body of Mary...or the mind of Joseph...or the sandals of the Magi and imagine what it must have been like on that for them on that wondrous morning 2000 years ago.

The story can be traced back to the prophets in 700 BC. That's old. Or it can be as fresh and new as the translucent, smooth skin of a new born babe. It all depends on how vulnerable we children of God are willing to be in the year of our Lord, two thousand and nineteen. However you choose to enjoy the advent season this year, trust this: God is writing a new story, and you are in it.

*Pastor Michael*

### WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

#### **December 1 "The Power of the Promise"**

We will open the season of advent with the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Don't we look forward to those familiar songs, the quiet, loveliness of the sanctuary, the heartfelt singing of the choir, and the powerful words, *"This is my body, take and eat."*

#### **December 8 "The Power of Longing"**

The meditative music from the communities of Taize and Iona will calm our spirits and open our hearts to hear the words of the one declares, *"Prepare the way of the Lord!"*

(cont'd. p. 2)

## STAFF DIRECTORY

120 East Swissvale Avenue  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15218  
Phone: 412-241-4613  
www.fpcedgewood.org

Pastor:  
The Rev. Michael P. Rucker  
mprucker@fpcedgewood.org

Pastor Emeritus:  
Dr. Gerald Hollingsworth

Minister of Music:  
Shaun Cloonan  
music@fpcedgewood.org

Organist & Pianist:  
Sunny Sakai  
sunnysakai4@gmail.com

FROGS Director, Office &  
Cleaning Manager:  
Judy Mysels  
frogs@fpcedgewood.org  
office@fpcedgewood.org

Building Manager:  
Rob Mysels  
building@fpcedgewood.org

Office Hours:  
Monday–Friday  
9:00AM–2:00PM

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 December (cont'd.)

#### December 15 “The Power of Story”

The stories and prophecies that lead up to Christmas Eve bring hope, peace, hope, and love to those who have ears to hear and a heart open to the gracious presence of God in our midst. We will raise our voices and sing the enchanting, hopeful, joyful songs of advent and Christmas.

#### December 22 “The Power in Waiting”

*“The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.”*

Thus says the Lord. Have we turned away from the hope, or are we still faithfully waiting and yearning for everything to be made new?

#### December 24 “The Power of Emmanuel”

Our Christmas Eve service will begin at 8:00 p.m. As darkness settles around us, the story of Jesus’ birth, the flickering candles, and the celebration of Holy Communion will bring a warm our hears, enlighten our eyes, and lift our spirits. Please join us. Bring the entire family – and your friends.

#### December 29 “When Power Appears Weak”

We have a tendency to forget that the Christmas story does not conclude with shepherds kneeling and the angels singing. There is a price to pay when the Almighty God dons the flesh of a baby boy. Yet even in the face of danger, the will of God will be done.



### A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

*Thanksgiving is the very heart and soul of stewardship.*

Every year the elders and I ask you to reconsider our discipleship. Stewardship is our grateful response to the love God has shown us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and confirmed in the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. Stewardship is an opportunity to act of the words we sing:

*Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,  
who wondrous things hath done, in whom this world rejoices;  
who, from our mothers’ arms hath blessed us on our way  
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.*

You all should have received a letter from the church requesting financial support for the ministry of this congregation; it includes a commitment card. Please return to the church at your earliest convenience. Thank you.

# Our Church Community



## SESSION NOTES

At their November meeting, Session voted to:

- Remove the first 2 pews in the sanctuary by Dec 3 and replace them by December 15, with the cost paid by the ESO. This is for the ESO Holiday Concert.
- Call a Congregational Meeting for Dec. 8, following church. The purpose of the meeting is to present the preliminary budget for 2020 and nominations for church officers.
- Authorize Mr. Ochs to investigate alternative uses of the FPCE building and report to Session.

**A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING** will be held immediately after worship on **Sunday, December 8**, to receive the first presentation of the budget for 2020 and the Nominating Committee slate of officers.

## CALL FOR 2019 REPORTS

On **Sunday, January 26**, immediately following worship, the Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held to receive the approved 2020 budget and ministry team reports. Send reports to [office@fpcedgewood.org](mailto:office@fpcedgewood.org)

## PROJECT MANGER TREE

The Board of Deacons will be working with Mars Home for Youth this year. Please select a tag from the tree (located in the Lounge) and buy an age-appropriate gift. Money can also be donated to buy wrapping paper, gift bags and ribbon. See any Deacon for more information about the project, for help in selecting a manger tree tag, and for gift ideas. Please sponsor one of God's children. We would like your UNWRAPPED gifts along with the tag returned to the church **by Dec 15**. Thank you for your support of this project.

God Bless,  
*Mary Ann Hartman, Moderator,  
The Board of Deacons*



**SHADYSIDE ACADEMY** brought in approximately 3200 canned goods to replenish our Food Pantry and other pantries in the area. Our FROGS kids will sort the pantry goods that were brought in from the Shadyside Academy annual food drive.

## **SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY**

Each year the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania awards scholarships to college students or high school seniors from Pennsylvania who major in a wide range of horticulture-related subjects including: Agriculture Education, Agronomy, Floriculture, Horticulture, Landscape Architecture, Botany, Biology, Conservation, Environmental Engineering, Forestry, Plant Pathology, Rural/Urban Planning, Wildlife Science, and Land Management.

A single application form, due to GCFP by February 1, 2020, allows a student to compete for one of several scholarships. The GCFP also awards grants to Teachers and College Students to attend an Audubon Camp. The same application form is used for these grants.

The Garden Club of Forest Hills would be pleased to sponsor qualifying young people from your congregation. You can get an application packet from Flo Raisig.



November was a short, but busy month for FROGS. Some of the things we did this month included: made Thanksgiving cards to be included in Deacon baskets, made butter from heavy cream and salt, celebrated November birthdays by baking and decorating cupcakes, and decorated the Sanctuary Christmas Tree while listening to Christmas songs accompanied by our own Sunny Sakai. We will reconvene after the holiday to meet again in December for another short month, meeting only 6 times. We have a great army, chorus, or colony (actual name of a group of frogs) of FROGS and VERY SPECIAL VOLUNTEERS!

Huge thanks for the monetary donations as well as the snacks and drinks from the wonderful FPCE family.

**Drinks and snacks are still needed for the upcoming January session.**

*Judy Mysels, Director*

[WWW.ALampUntoMyFeet.net](http://WWW.ALampUntoMyFeet.net)

*Some Thoughts on Advent, the Season of Waiting, of Anticipation*

*Kneeling in Bethlehem*

by Ann Weems

In each heart lies a Bethlehem,  
an inn where we must ultimately answer  
whether there is room or not.  
When we are Bethlehem-bound  
we experience our own advent in his.  
When we are Bethlehem-bound  
we can no longer look the other way  
conveniently not seeing the stars  
not hearing the angel voices.  
We can no longer excuse ourselves by busily  
tending our sheep or our kingdoms.  
This Advent let's go to Bethlehem  
and see this thing that the Lord has made known to us.  
In the midst of shopping sprees  
let's ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.  
Through the tinsel  
let's look for the gold of the Christmas Star.  
In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos,  
let's listen for the brush of angel's wings.  
This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem  
and find our kneeling places.

*Become Empty*

So you want to find God?  
Empty yourself of everything —

your worries and your hopes,  
your wishes and your fears.

For when you are finally  
empty, God will find you,

because God cannot tolerate  
emptiness and will come

to fill you with himself.



# December



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 Choir 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	2  7:00 Scouts	3 10:00 Book Club  3:45 FROGS 7:00 Symphony Reh.	4	5  3:45 FROGS	6  8:00 AA (SR)	7  7:30 Edgewood Symphony Holiday Concert
8 9:30 Choir 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship <b>Cong. Mtg.</b>	9  7:00 Scouts	10 10:00 Book Club  3:45 FROGS 7:00 Session 7:00 AA	11	12  3:45 FROGS	13  8:00 AA (SR)	14  1-4 P.W. Christmas Party (L)  8:30 AA (SR)
15 9:30 Choir 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	16  7:00 Scouts	17 10:00 Book Club  3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA (SR)	18	19  3:45 FROGS	20  8:00 AA (SR)	21  8:30 AA (SR)
22 9:30 Choir 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	23  7:00 Scouts	24 CHRISTMAS EVE  <b>8:00 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service</b>	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26  NO FROGS	27  8:00 AA (SR)	28  8:30 AA (SR)
29 9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	30  7:00 Scouts	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE  7:00 AA (SR)				



120 E. Swissvale Avenue • Pittsburgh, PA 15218

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE  
HAS BEEN CHANGED TO  
8:00PM**



**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 8, 2019.**

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:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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