



The First Advent in Palestine

Reversals, Resistance, and the Ongoing Complexity of Hope

When we picture the first Advent, we see Mary and Joseph huddled by a manger. We picture Gabriel, magi, and shepherds tending their flocks. A shining star against a midnight sky. But this harmonized version has lifted the Advent story out of its context--those who experienced the first Advent had to travel through great darkness to reach the hope that shining star announced. Trusted scholar and community organizer Kelley Nikondeha takes us back, to where the landscape of Palestine is once again the geographic, socioeconomic, and political backdrop for the Advent story.

Reading the Advent narratives of Luke and Matthew anew, in their original context, changes so much about how we see the true story of resistance, abusive rulers and systems of oppression, and God coming to earth. In Luke, Rome and Caesar loom, and young Mary's strength and resolve shine brightly as we begin to truly understand what it meant for her to live in the tumultuous Galilee region. In Matthew, through Joseph's point of view, we see the brutality of Herod's rule and how the complexities of empire weighed heavily on the Holy Family. We bear witness to the economic hardship of Nazareth, Bethlehem, and the many villages in between--concerns about daily bread, crushing debt, land loss, and dispossession that ring a familiar echo to our modern ears. Throughout her explorations, Nikondeha features the stories of modern-day Palestinians, centering their voices to help us meet an Advent recognizable for today. This thought-provoking examination invites us into a season of discovery, one that is realistic and honest, and that still wonders at the goodness of God's grace.

The First Advent in Palestine by Kelley Nikondeha will guide us through our Advent season this year. The book is free digitally on Hoopla (app or website) with your library card.

You can participate in the discussion in two ways!

Tuesday Book Group will begin discussion on November 28 in its usual free-flowing way.

Or you can join in **"Happy Meal"** conversations Thursday nights at 6:30PM in the Gathering Place with structured conversation about the book and world events as well as hands-on activities, crafts, and prayer. However, reading isn't required to join in conversation--you're also welcome to drop in whichever weeks you are available. We invite you to bring a packed dinner or take-out as we talk and eat together. Happy Meal Schedule:

- November 30 - "Beginnings" and Chapter 1 "Silence and Suffering"
- December 7 - Chapter 2 "God's Peace Campaign"
- December 14 - Chapter 4 "Mothers of Advent"
- December 21 - Chapters 5 & 6 "A Hospitable Birth in a Hard Economy," "Visible and Invisible"
- January 4 - Chapter 8 "Unexpected Hope"
- January 11 - Chapter 9 "Even After God Arrived"





DECEMBER 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 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 and fill out the sign-up form.

December 3: First Sunday of Advent

Hope. We will celebrate the Lord's Supper together!
Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9;
Mark 13:24-37. There will be a congregational meeting following worship.

December 10: Second Sunday of Advent

Peace. Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a;
Mark 1:1-8

December 17: Third Sunday of Advent

Joy. The choir will share a musical presentation "How Do You Welcome a King?" Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Luke 1:46b-55;
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24 (11 AM): Fourth Sunday of Advent

Children and Family Service

Love. Get excited for an Advent puppet show like you've never seen before! 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26;
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

December 24 (8 PM): Christmas Eve

A traditional candlelight service. We will celebrate the Lord's Supper together! Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14;
Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

December 31: Epiphany of the Lord

Lessons and Carols. Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14;
Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12



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

sunny@fpcedgewood.org

LOVE GOD
EACH OTHER
OUR NEIGHBORS

Session Notes

At their November 14, 2023, Session approved the following:

- Election of Amy Moore as our Congregational Representative to the December 7, 2023 Presbytery meeting.
- Clean carpets and repair the sanctuary carpet at a cost of no more than \$500.
- Call a Congressional meeting on December 3, 2023, in the Gathering Place after church to review the budget for 2024 and to elect church officers.
- Call our Annual Congregational meeting on January 21, 2024 for a secondary review of the budget and to receive annual church reports. The meeting and luncheon will be held in the Gathering Place after church.
- Buy a Giant Eagle gift card for Jill Bortz to thank her for the work she is doing on our financial records.

Notice of Congregational Meeting: December 3

All active members of the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood are asked to attend a congregational meeting immediately following worship on Sunday, December 3 to help us elect officers for 2024 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.



M·H·Y
FAMILY SERVICES

A Season of Giving

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. 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 side door bulletin board and on the church website at fpcedgewood.org. Donations must be received by **December 5** so the volunteers and staff can 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 and began reading *The First Advent In Palestine* by Kelley Nikondeha on November 28 in its usual free-flowing way. would be a great time to join if you have been considering it!



Happy New Year! The beginning of Advent marks the beginning of a new church year. As we look with eager anticipation toward the coming of the Christ child, we share in special worship moments like the lighting of the Advent wreath, and this year, a special presentation from the choir!

The last time our own Sanctuary Choir has prepared something special for worship during Advent was 2010, believe it or not! Most years, I've brought my high school group in but thought this year would be a good one to give our choir family a little project. We will share selections from the Christmas musical called "How Do You Welcome a King?" Join us during worship on December 17.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! – *Shaun*

No Place Like Home for the Holidays...At FPCE!

Here is a listing of all the events happening at FPCE in the month of December:

Saturday, December 2 at 7:30PM is the annual Edgewood Symphony Orchestra kick-off to the holiday season: Songs of Nights and Lights. Tickets: \$15/\$10 at edgewoodsymphony.org



Wednesday, December 6 at 6:00PM
Soup with St. Nicholas

Our free community meals on the first Wednesday of the month continue in December with a twist - bring the kids to hear the story of Saint Nicholas, visit with him, and have some homemade soups and breads for family dinner. Join us on Wednesday, December 6 from 6-8PM in the Social Room. All are welcome!

Saturday, December 9 at 7:30PM

Sunday, December 10 at 3:00PM

Join Vocal Confluence for their annual holiday show! You'll hear our all-voice barbershop chorus, as well as several small group performances of some new and old holiday favorites!

Vocal Confluence is a Pittsburgh all-voice barbershop chorus that represents the Pittsburgh Metro Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society. Our rapidly-growing group is committed to musical excellence, whether that be barbershop, jazz, traditional choral, and contemporary a cappella styles. Our members have a variety of backgrounds and interests, and includes software developers, healthcare providers, engineers, and teachers, among others. We pride ourselves not only in our musical product, but also our fellowship. We fully embrace the "Everyone in Harmony" initiative introduced by the Barbershop Harmony Society in 2018. VC rehearses weekly at FPCE on Monday evenings, and our own David Falk sings with them!



Saturday, December 16 at 9:00AM 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. Sarah teaches her students in the old Christian Education Office at the end of the first-floor hall next to the Gathering Place.

Scout Tree Sale

Come get your tree, and support Scouting in your neighborhood! The annual Edgewood Troop/Pack 23 Tree Sale starts Saturday, November 25 and continues in December. The sale will take place Saturdays and Sundays at Koenig Field.

- Saturday, December 2, 9am-7pm
- Sunday, December 3, 12pm-7pm

- Saturday, December 9, 9am-7pm
- Sunday, December 10, 12pm-7pm*

*Sale continues until sold-out. This may happen earlier (or later), than the final date listed here. Please check the Scout (Edgewood Cub Scout Pack 23) page for updates.





Rudyard Kipling was a very successful author in his lifetime. A British newspaper criticized him and ridiculed him as a mercenary. Quoting the paper, "He is now just writing for the money, one word of Rudyard Kipling today is worth a hundred dollars." Shortly after the unkind article, a reporter approached Kipling and said, "So, you're worth a hundred dollars a word. Here's a hundred dollars. Give me a word." Handing him a pencil and paper, Kipling took the hundred dollars put it in his pocket, and on the paper wrote one word. Thanks! Such a glorious word. Though every day and month deserves our thanks to God, we set aside November with the Thanksgiving holiday to gather in joyous community with family and friends. Jesus fed the 5000 but each year HE finds a way to serve millions of the less fortunate. So we deacons hope, as you sat down in togetherness to eat this year (at half time of course), we remembered to praise God for wonderful gifts of which we are thankful.

Though not always visible the deacons are active behind the scenes quietly DOING. On November 1st we hosted a free spaghetti dinner for the community. Our visions of serving 100 guests and friends was not so far-fetched with our attendance being 80 served. On the morning of Sunday November 12 the deacons gathered to assemble Harvest Baskets. Full of goodies the baskets were distributed to our many friends of the congregation. The Sunday School children created beautiful Thanksgiving cards that were well received. On Friday November 17th the Shadyside Academy 2nd graders arrived at the church with a busload of several thousand items to stock our food pantry. This annual drive has rewarded our church for over 20 years. It was a fun-filled morning with the children. Stories of the history of Thanksgiving, the evolution of a can of corn, and each student offering why they were thankful. Many of the foodstuffs were transferred quickly to the Wilkinsburg Community Ministry. Their pantry needs are far greater than ours. So yes we have been actively busy and look forward to greeting you Sunday mornings. And we deacons are thankful to for all of you and the opportunity to serve God through our church.

Rick Masten

Shady Side Academy Food Pantry Donation

Our annual food donation to our food pantry and WCM and others from Shady Side Academy 2nd graders and their teachers was again a HUGE success. The bus load arrived Friday morning, Nov. 17 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 have 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.

The Bulletin Board

Sharing the Joys & Concerns of the FPCE Family

- A huge thank-you to Rick Masten and his friend Tom, who welcomed the 2nd grade classes from Shady Side Academy when they brought in their food drive, took donations to WCM and restocked our pantry and almost also single-handedly “hung the greens”.
- Happy news, Jake Santo was accepted at a couple of colleges and is going to attend Pitt Johnstown next year.
- Holiday decorations are going up inside and outside! Thanks to Rob for building the tree on our side lawn.
- Utility bills at the church have been increasing. If you observe any toilets or faucets dripping, please alert Tim McKee or Judy Mysels. Please respect HVAC zones, and keep doors closed and lights off unless they are in use.
- Billy and Sarah Crean welcomed Zoe Margaret into the world on Wednesday, November 8!! She joins big sister Georgia, and all are doing well in Minneapolis.

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.



Starry Night Gala
SAVE THE DATE
Saturday, March 09, 2024 • Edgewood Country Club

*An evening celebrating some of the Stars of
Woodland Hills School District*

**DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI OF THE YEAR
DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**

www.woodlandhillsfoundation.com/2024starrynightgala

WH foundation



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Locations: Book Club – Apossos Home AA – Social Room Vocal Confluence & ESO – Sanctuary Milepost6 – Basement Band Room Fellowship – Gathering Place Choir – Choir Room					1	2
Flute Lessons – C.E. Office SAA, Session – Lounge Scouts – Scout or Social Room Bible Study – Zoom Happy Meals – Gathering Place Coffee with the Pastor – 61B Café (Regent Sq)					2:00 Flute (CE) 8:30 AA (SR)	6:30 Edgewood Light-up Night 7:30 ESO Concert 8:00 AA (SR)
3 9:00 Choir (S) 11:00 Worship (S) 12:00 Congregational Meeting (GP)	4 2:00 Flute (CE) 6:30 Scouts (SR) 7:00 VC (S)	5 10:00 Book Club 2:00 Flute (CE) 7:00 ESO (S)	6 9:00 Coffee with the Pastor (61B) 2:00 Flute (CE) 6:00 Soup with St. Nick (SR) 7:30 Bible Study (zoom)	7 2:00 Flute (CE) 6:30 Happy Meals 7:00 MilePost6 (B) 7:00 SAA (L)	8 2:00 Flute (CE) 7:00 VC Tech (S) 8:30 AA (SR)	9 7:30 VC Show (S) 8:00 AA (SR)
10 9:00 Choir (CR) 11:00 Worship (S) 12:00 Fellowship 3:00 VC Show (S)	11 2:00 Flute (CE) 6:30 Scouts (SR) 7:00 VC (S)	12 10:00 Book Club 2:00 Flute (CE) 7:00 Session (L) 7:00 ESO (S)	13 9:00 Coffee with the Pastor (61B) 2:00 Flute (CE) 7:30 Bible Study (zoom)	14 2:00 Flute (CE) 6:30 Happy Meals 7:00 Milepost6 (B) 7:00 SAA (L)	15 10:00 Poinsettia Set-up (S) 2:00 Flute (CE) 6:30 Jason/David Xmas Party (GP) 8:30 AA (SR)	16 9:30 Steranka Flute Recital (S) 8:00 AA (SR)
17 9:00 Choir (CR) 11:00 Worship (S) 12:00 Fellowship	18 6:30 Scouts (SR)	19 10:00 Book Club	20 9:00 Coffee with the Pastor (61B) 7:30 Bible Study (zoom)	21 6:30 Happy Meals 7:00 Milepost6 (B) 7:00 SAA (L)	22 8:30 AA (SR)	23 8:00 AA (SR)
24 Christmas Eve 11:00 Family Worship/Puppet 8:00 Candlelight Service	25 Christmas Day Office Closed	26 10:00 Book Club	27 7:30 Bible Study (zoom)	28 7:00 SAA (L)	29 8:30 AA (SR)	30 8:00 AA (SR)
31 New Year's Eve 11:00 Lessons & Carols Worship	January 1 New Year's Day Office Closed Happy 2024!					



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. **Deadline is Sunday, December 3, 2023.**

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:

By: _____

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