

Words for the Beginning

Friends,

As the Advent season approaches, I find myself writing to you a cold November day, cozy on my couch with a cup of hot coffee. On our couch, we have a few blankets. One is black, white, and red—crocheted for me by my Great-Grandaunt Bootsie (my grandmother's aunt). Another is a crocheted rainbow blanket given to me a few years ago by my family. And then we have the M&M blanket that was \$5 when we bought \$30 worth of products at the M&M store in Las Vegas. These blankets provide warmth and comfort, but also remind me of those who love me and of the memories I hold close to my heart.

This year's Advent series is called "Words for the Beginning" and is inspired by the idea of a quilt. Like a quilt, it is meant to provide warmth and comfort as we begin again. Not only does Advent marks the new church calendar year, but we are in a time of rapid change and uncertainty. The world is changing quickly, and it can be difficult to know what to expect next. In the midst of all this change, it is important to remember that God is still with us.

The "Words for the Beginning" are like the patches in a quilt, stitched together with the wisdom of scripture. They are the words we need to hear, the words that offer comfort, guidance, and strength as we navigate the challenges that lie ahead.

Because words have the power to shape our thoughts, beliefs, and actions. They can uplift or tear down, heal or wound. We must choose our words carefully and focus on those that inspire hope and love.

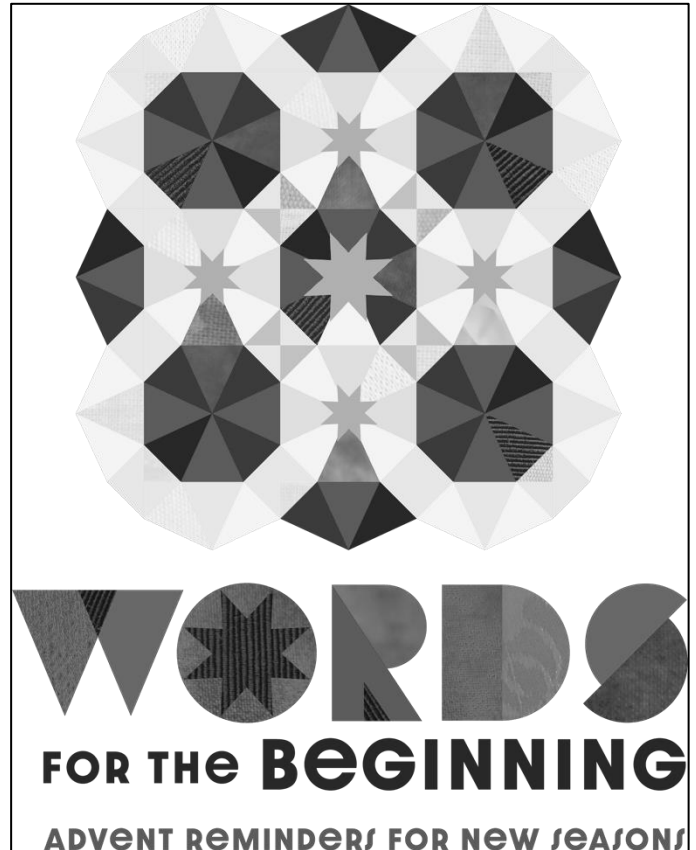
If you stitched all your words together into a quilt, what would it look like? Would it be warm and soft? Would it provide protection? Often, quilts are made from scraps leftover from other projects; would you quilt be crafted from fragments of the past, woven together to create something new?

Like a quilt passed down through generations, our faith connects us to a sacred Story. Like the blankets my family gave me, our faith has been passed down to us from those "special ones who loved us into being" (as Mr. Rogers said).

I encourage you to take some time this Advent season to reflect on the words that are most important to you. What words do you need to hear again and again? What words will help you to begin again? What words do you need to speak to others?

In Christ,

Pastor Jason



December 2024 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 our website.

December 1

First Sunday of Advent – You Are a Blessing

Isaiah 43:1-7, Luke 1:26-38

We will celebrate the Lord's Supper together. There will be a congregational meeting after worship to ask questions about the preliminary 2025 budget.

December 8

Second Sunday of Advent – We Can't Go Alone

Ruth 1, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

December 15

Third Sunday of Advent – Do the Good That is Yours to Do

Isaiah 58:9b-12, Luke 3:7-16

The North Hills Singers will be joining us in worship this morning, singing alongside our FPCE Sanctuary Choir! A mini concert follows the service.

Saturday, December 21

The Longest Night: A Service for Endings and Beginnings

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, Isaiah 43:16-21

Join in our Blue Christmas service at 1:00 PM in the Sanctuary.

December 22

Fourth Sunday of Advent – Hope is Worth the Risk

Luke 1-3

A Family Worship Service, led by our Worship & Arts Team!

Tuesday, December 24: Christmas Eve Service at 8:00 PM

Nativity of the Lord – Love Knows Your Name

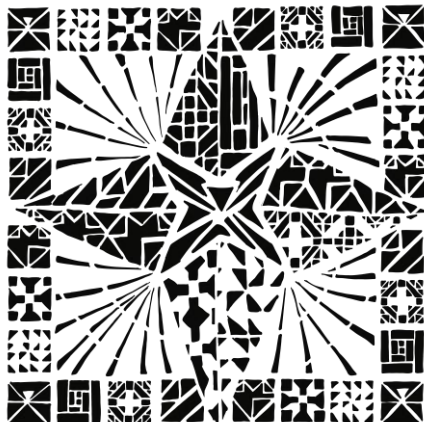
Isaiah 9:6, Luke 2:1-20

We will celebrate the Lord's Supper together at our annual candlelight service.

December 29

A Cozy Sunday of Lessons and Laughter

Wear your favorite Christmas sweater or pajamas to worship as we laugh, play, and worship!



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

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Office & Cleaning Manager

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LOVE GOD
EACH OTHER
OUR NEIGHBORS

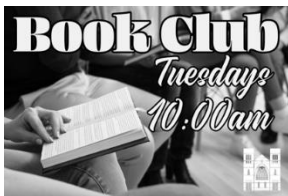
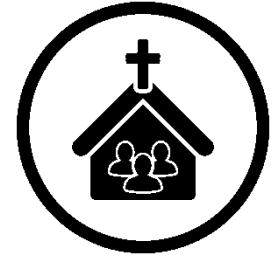
Session Notes

At their November meeting, Session approved the following:

- The election of Mrs. Moore as our delegate to the December Presbytery meeting.
- Baptism of Rui Babilonia, if the way be clear.
- The request of Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society to digitize our information. We will receive a copy.
- Minutes of the November 22 Session meeting.
- Session received and discussed the preliminary 2025 Budget. This budget will be presented to the Congregation at a meeting on December 1.

Notice of Congregational Meeting: December 1

All active members of the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood are asked to attend a congregational meeting immediately following worship on Sunday, December 1 to help us elect officers for 2025 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.



Tuesday Book Club

Our Tuesday Morning Book Group continues to meet weekly 10:00AM at the Apossos home, 361 Maple Avenue and began reading *Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas*, Plough Publishing House (2014).

2025 Evening Book Group

Pastor Jason is excited to announce an evening book club starting in 2025! We'll gather roughly every other month for dinner and a lively discussion. To help choose our reading list, please complete this "Blind Date with a Book" form by December 16th: <https://tinyurl.com/fpceblinddate>

Art in Edgewood

The Edgewood Foundation would like to thank the FPCE for use of the sanctuary for our Art in Edgewood Event. We had over 80 people come in to see the work of local artists and the beauty of our glorious building. It was a no charge event for artists and attendees that showcased the art of 12 talented artists. Mediums included wood, charcoal, watercolor, glass, oils and more. Many people mentioned they were happy to see the inside of the church, as they had never been in before. All around the event was a huge success.



The deacons have been busy. On November 17, 2024, we hosted a delicious spaghetti dinner as part of the FPCE First Wednesday Free Community Dinners. We estimate we served over 80 guests and raised over \$400 for future needs.

On November 17, 2024, we assembled 10 Harvest Baskets for our neighbors.

We are now planning two Christmas Caroling events on Light up Night, December 7, and on December 12. Please let us know if you'd like to join us.

Merry Christmas to all-
In Christ,
Rhonda Apossos, Deacons Secretary

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:



December 4: Soup with St. Nick

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 4 at 6:00PM** in the Social Room. All are welcome!

Saturday, December 7 at 7:30PM is the annual Edgewood Symphony Orchestra kick-off to the holiday season. Bring the family and share your holiday season with mezzo-soprano soloist Amanda Russo Stante and trumpet soloist Catherine Getchell. We invite you to experience this festive concert of seasonal favorites, sparkling surprises and the ever-popular Holiday Sing-Along, guaranteed to put you and your family in the holiday spirit. Tickets at edgewoodsymphony.org

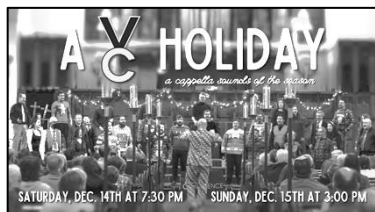


CAROLING

We have two opportunities to do some Christmas Caroling, and we hope you will join us to help bring our friends and neighbors Christmas spirit and cheer. Everyone is invited to attend, so please invite friends/family/neighbors to come out and sing with us.

- **December 7** - Edgewood Light Up Night. We will meet at 6:15 at the church steps. We will hand out song books, but you will probably already know the songs we are singing. The Edgewood Foundation will be lighting the tree at Memorial Park (across from the church) promptly at 6:30, that is the point we will begin caroling. We will then take a short walk up two blocks of Maple Avenue and back down, caroling all the way. *Please note that Maple Avenue will be closed to cars for the event. **We will finish caroling in plenty of time to attend the Edgewood Symphony performance that begins at 7:30 that evening.
- **December 12** - We are solidifying our route, but we are meeting at the church at 7pm. We will carpool to three or four locations to sing a couple of Christmas songs to those that are unable to get out or attend church services. These are church members or church friends. We hope to make a stop to sing for the residents at the new retirement home in Edgewood Town Center. More details will be coming on this festive event.

Saturday, December 14 at 7:30PM & **Sunday, December 15** at 3:00PM



Join Vocal Confluence for a cappella sounds of the season this December! Enjoy classics such as "Deck the Halls," "White Christmas," and "Let it Snow," to new favorites like "Warm in December," "When Christmas Comes Around," and more! These arrangements will vary in style from traditional barbershop singing to vocal jazz styles. There will surely be something for everyone!

Saturday, December 21 at 11:00AM to Noon 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.



Shady Side Academy Food Pantry Donation

Our annual 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. 22 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.



MUSIC *Ministry*

Members of our FPCE Sanctuary Choir joined with singers from First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh in Shadyside and Temple Sinai to create an Interfaith Choir for the 48th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on Tuesday, November 26. As of the writing of this article, the service hasn't yet happened, but we had our rehearsal, and it was full of joyful noises! Cantor David from Temple Sinai led 2 rounds with his guitar in Hebrew, Rev. Deryck gave us an authentic gospel experience by teaching us in an echo-style from the piano, showcasing his amazing range (singing with the sopranos effortlessly!), and I led a call and response piece. These are to be interspersed between the reflections by all of the clergy participating from nearly a dozen different faith communities. I'm thankful for our singers and the opportunity we had to join with others outside our walls in prayer and fellowship.

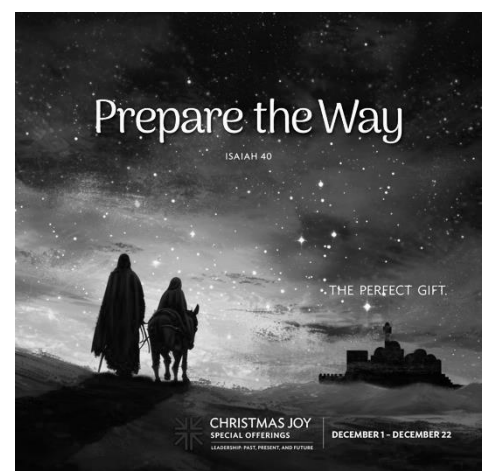
This month, we'll explore some “new text/old tune” hymns as part of the new Advent series Jason will be leading us through this season. I'm also pleased to bring back my students from North Hills to worship on December 15. They'll join our Sanctuary Choir in presenting an anthem during the service, and then sing around 8-10 songs after the service. Thanks in advance to our music ministry members for providing lunch for the students before we head back to school! And of course, it wouldn't be Christmas Eve without our traditional candlelit singing of “Silent Night.” I hope you will be able to join us as we welcome the Christ child into the world.

Peace,
Shaun

Christmas Joy Offering

The Christmas Joy Offering provides assistance to current and retired church workers and their families in their time of need, and develops our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

Giving Tuesday is coming up on Dec. 3, but did you know you can support the Most Immediate Need today? Your gift will be used to support PC(USA) ministries showing God's love in your neighborhood and around the globe right now. Your gift will combine with thousands of others who will give on Giving Tuesday to make an impact through the Church.

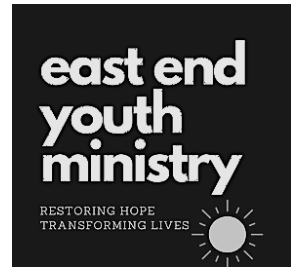


SESSION COMMITTEE HAPPENINGS...

WORSHIP & FAITH FORMATION COMMITTEE

East End Youth Ministry: A Beacon For Teens

The Worship Committee recently toured the East End Youth Ministry (EEYM) and was inspired by their commitment to supporting local youth. EEYM provides a safe, nurturing space for teenagers to grow in faith, explore their talents, and build positive relationships. Their After School Program, held Monday through Wednesday from 3–6 p.m., offers free access to a computer lab, games, art, tutoring, and even a mini recording studio for teens ages 13–18. Casa San Jose also offers ESL classes 2 days a week. This vibrant environment is a testament to their mission of fostering creativity and connection.



On Wednesday evenings, EEYM's Youth Group gathers from 5:30–7:30 p.m., beginning with a shared meal and followed by programming. This group provides specific guidance to help teens love God, serve others, and navigate life's challenges with faith. The work of EEYM is a vital resource in our community, and FPCE is honored to witness and support their efforts in shaping the next generation of disciples.

EEYM is located at Beulah Presbyterian 2500 McCrady Road Pittsburgh, PA 15235.

For more information, call 412-812-3802 or visit EEYM's website <https://www.eeympgh.org/>.

MISSION COMMITTEE

Angel Tree - Toys for Kids

FPCE is once again requesting donations of new toys for children whose families aren't able to shop for gifts for their little ones. This Christmas we are partnering with the Edgewood Foundation to ask for toys from members of the local community and from our church community. If you would like to give a gift for these families in need, please leave your unwrapped toys/gifts at the church or in the donation box by Santa's Tent on Light Up Night. The Mission Committee will distribute these toys to local families through neighboring children's programs. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call Marcia Haley or the church.

Blessing Bags

FPCE is going to be building Blessing Bags on January 12 following the church service and our congregational meeting. 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 5 or consider dropping off requested items (see list below) before January 11. Our goal is to fill a minimum of 200 bags with each of the items listed below. If you have any questions please email Tyler McGuigan at m McGuigant Tyler@yahoo.com Please limit donations to the following items:



toothbrush

toothpaste

mouthwash

comb

chapstick

small packs of tissues

hand sanitizer (small bottles)

applesauce (squeeze packets)

granola bars

crackers

tuna/chicken packets

(squeeze, not canned)

jerky sticks

dried fruit

fruit snacks

bottled water

socks

plastic forks/spoons



Sharing the Joys & Concerns of the FPCE Family

- Mission Committee has been very busy last month – organizing and manning a bake sale table: Rai, Rhonda, Stephanie, David, Max, Annika, Amy during voting here. Proceeds benefit free summer Community Dinners. Special thanks to all our wonderful bakers who contributed goodies for the sale.
- Deacons fed 80 people at their free Pasta Dinner and are all pros when making meatballs now thanks to meatball Mama, Ruth Miller, showing them her expertise prior to the dinner.
- A huge thank-you to Rick Masten and his friend Tom, who welcomed the 2nd grade classes from Shady Side Academy in their food drive, took donations to WCM, restocked our pantry and did a lot of the hanging of the greens.
- Hanging of the Greens was a decorating success with many of you who stayed after worship to beautify our church with holiday decorations. Thanks to Rob for building the tree on our side lawn.
- Sympathies to the Veltre family in the passing of Vince Veltre, Jr. and Ondaine Williams.

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.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 Choir (S) 11:00 Worship (S) 12:00 Cong. Mtg. Fellowship	2 2-6:30 Flute (CE) 6:30 Scouts (SR) 7:00 VC (S)	3 10:00 Book Club 2-6:30 Flute (CE) 7:00 ESO (S)	4 6:00 Soup with St. Nick (SR)	5 2-6:30 Flute (CE) 7:00 MilePost6 (B) 7:00 SAA (L)	6 2:00 WCM Food Pantry (SL) 7:00 AA (SR) 8:30 AA (SR)	7 6:30 Light-up Night 7:30 ESO Concert 8:30 AA (SR)
8 9:30 Choir (S) 11:00 Worship (S) 12:00 Fellowship	9 2-6:30 Flute (CE) 6:30 Scouts (SR) 7:00 VC (S)	10 10:00 Book Club 2-6:30 Flute (CE) 7:00 Session Mtg.	11 2-6:30 Flute (CE)	12 2-6:30 Flute (CE) 7:00 Caroling 7:00 MilePost6 (B) 7:00 SAA (L)	13 2:00 WCM Food Pantry (SL) 7:00 AA (SR) 8:30 AA (SR)	14 7:30 VC Concert 8:30 AA (SR)
15 9:30 Choir (CR) 11:00 Worship (S) 12:00 North Hills Mini-Concert 3:00 VC Concert	16 2-6:30 Flute (CE) 6:30 Scouts (SR) 7:00 VC (S)	17 10:00 Book Club 2-6:30 Flute (CE)	18 2-6:30 Flute (CE) 6-8PM Steering Comm. Mtg.	19 2-6:30 Flute (CE) 7:00 Milepost6 (B) 7:00 SAA (L)	20 2:00 WCM Food Pantry (SL) 7:00 AA (SR) 8:30 AA (SR)	21 11:00 Steranka Flute Recital (S) 1:00 Blue Xmas 8:30 AA (SR)
22 9:30 Choir (CR) 11:00 Puppet/Fam Worship (S) 12:00 Fellowship	23 6:30 Scouts (SR)	24 8:00 Christmas Eve Worship	25 CHRISTMAS	26 7:00 SAA (L)	27 2:00 WCM Food Pantry (SL) 7:00 AA (SR) 8:30 AA (SR)	28 8:30 AA (SR)
29 11:00 Worship	30	31 10:00 Book Club	Locations:			
			Book Club – Apossos Home AA – Social Room Vocal Confluence & ESO – Sanctuary Milepost6 – Basement Band Room Fellowship – Gathering Place Choir – Choir Room		Flute Lessons – C.E. Office SAA, Session – Lounge Worship – Sanctuary Scouts – Scout or Social Room	



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 8, 2024.**

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.