

November 2020

Sixth Sense

From the Pastor

I have been doing deep canvassing work. Out of commitment to my faith and my civic duty, I fell into the work because I want our values to have a say in the public sphere. It appealed to me because it has been proven to be effective, because it is relational, and because it involves a skill that hopefully I still have: a capacity to listen.

Deep canvassing has proved to be incredibly effective because it is grounded in stories. Listening to other people's stories and sharing your own. Out of that give and take, out of the establishment of trust that comes with any honest conversation, the opportunity arises to share why I vote the way I do.

But I also wanted to engage in this work because I believe our faith calls us to reach beyond our bubble, our own echo chamber, our own convictions, to hear someone else share their own. I need to try and build bridges with people with whom I would not agree about anything, because like it or not, we are in this together.

It has been a fascinating experience. Much has been made of how we live in parallel universes politically, and there is much that is true about that. But listening to the stories has reminded me that we are all coping with the same challenges. While we all might have very different solutions to those challenges, we all are trying to cope with an unprecedented set of circumstances.

It is all about trying to be a neighbor. It is not easy, but whenever we try and reach out to others, it is a good thing to do, and Jesus is pleased. Don't forget to vote!

Peace!

Vincent

We will continue to keep our building closed due to the ongoing public health concerns. All events and activities, including services of worship, remain temporarily suspended. Session will monitor this situation and in-person worship will resume when deemed feasible.

For continuing updates and to access our online worship experience, visit sixthchurch.org



SIXTH
presbyterian
CHURCH

November Worship and Preaching

November 1 – Joshua 1:1-9,
"Be Courageous"

November 8 – Matthew 25:1-13, "Living Toward God's Promised Day"

November 15 – Matthew 25:14-30, "Money, Sex, Shame, and Fear"

November 22 – Matthew 25:31-46, "Don't Be a Goat"

November 29 – Mark 13:24-37, "The End of Trouble"



What the Pastor Is Reading

Intimate Economy: Enslaved Women, Work, and America's Domestic Slave Trade, Alex Finley

Bound in the Bonds of Life: Pittsburgh Writers Reflect on the Tree of Life Tragedy

Friendly Reminders from the Stewardship Committee

"Shaped By Hope," our 2021 Stewardship Campaign: By now you should have received your 2021 Stewardship Packet. Please remember to fill out your pledge card and mail it back to the church, or email Amy Whipple (office@sixthchurch.org) with your annual pledge amount. In the December Sixth Sense, we will walk you through how to change your amount for 2021 through eGive.

2020 Pledge and Capital Campaign Fulfillment: By now you should have also received your Third Quarter Donation Statement. Since we have been worshipping virtually, some of us might have fallen behind since there is no Offertory. You can catch up by either sending a check to the Sixth, or clicking on the Donate button on the church's website and select Give Now, then select General Pledge or 2018 Capital Campaign.

While we are virtual, the work of Sixth continues and we are grateful for your support.

— The Stewardship Committee

CROP Walk 2020

It was an unusual year for the CROP Walk. Our group walk is usually a joyful gathering of dedicated people who share a commitment to combatting hunger through assistance and development.

In this year of COVID-19, we put out a call to people to walk alone or in small groups, with the same goals in mind (some of whom are pictured below). Taking a walk is something many of us are doing regularly. What had to happen next was not us regular. We had to reach out via email and phone call to encourage sponsors and donations, most of which arrived electronically via the church's walk page. Many of you also responded to the announcements that precede our on-line worship service.



Donations continue to arrive, but at this writing, we have received \$5,110. That's money that will combat hunger around the world (75%) and here in Pittsburgh (25%). Thank you! Many people in need thank you.

Should you still want to contribute, [click here!](#)

Sue Koehler and Lauren Ward



November Birthdays

November 1 Louise Craft

November 3 Andrew DeJong

Alice Scales

November 5 Mary Crossley

November 6 Megan Fogt

November 15.....Joan Gaul

November 16.....Grace Brennan

Brian Lazarus

November 17.....Peter Gilmore

November 21.....Bob Robinson-Dassel

November 22.....Cosy Cornelius-Bates

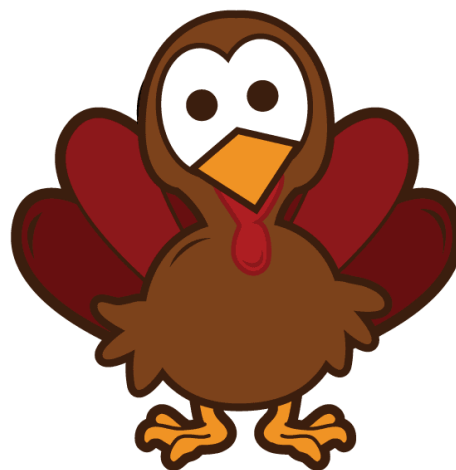
November 23.....Lucy Brennan

November 25.....Laura Sindhi

November 27.....Robin Holtje

Elena Berg

November 29.....Dan Brennan



What We're Reading / Watching / Listening To / Doing

Cosy Cornelius-Bates: Watching: *The Dragon Prince* and *Great British Bake Off*; listening: Molly of Denali podcast; reading: *Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*, *Wings of Fire*, and *Miss Hickory*; baking: sourdough hand pies and breads

Kate Davoli: Listening to the audiobook of *The City We Became* by NK Jemisin. House is stocked with nonperishables and smiles.

Lori King: Reading *Fault Lines* by Kevin Kruse and Julian Zelizer and listening to this season of *Unobserved*, which this year is about Jack the Ripper.

Sue Koehler: I have recently discovered that Toni Morrison does the narration for all her audiobooks, and she is terrific. Finished *The Bluest Eye* and am on to *Sula*.

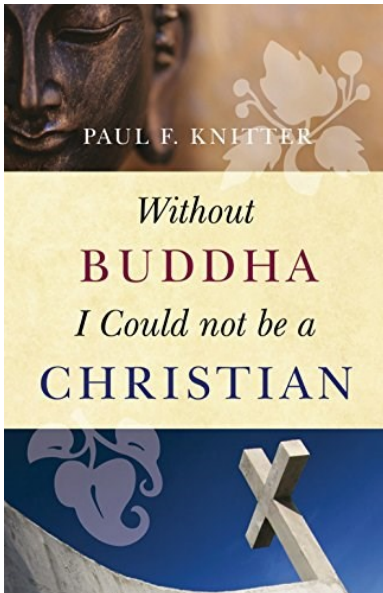
Linda May: Read *White Fragility* by Robin D'Angelo. Binge watched all five seasons of *Outlander*.

Lesla Rosamond: I listened to my book club choice for next month, *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens, a beautifully told story set in the marshes North Carolina. Also enjoyed *Long Bright River* by Liz Moore, a literary mystery crime fiction said in my hometown of Philadelphia. With the election coming up, I've been learning about election voter fraud in our own backyard in novels by David Pepper: *The People's House*, *The Wingman*, and *The Voter File*, set in Ohio, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia. Quick-paced and very easy to read.

Amy Whipple: Tana French's latest, *The Searcher*, did not disappoint. I took last week off from work and enjoyed all of my favorite *Simpsons* episodes while breaking in my new couch. Don't worry—I made sure to nap most days so as not to overwork myself.

Adult Education Opportunities, November

Adult Education will take place Sunday mornings at 9:45. Zoom links will be included in the weekly all-church email the Friday before the meeting.



Spiritual Resources for Coping: Without Buddha, I Could Not Be a Christian by Paul Kittner: Pastor Vincent will lead this discussion of Paul Kittner's landmark work. In a time of multiple crises, we need as many spiritual resources at our side as possible. With Kittner's book as a guide, we will talk about how our experience of other spiritualities has informed our own and helped us to thrive. **(November 1, 8, 15)**



Dr. Rachel Kranson, "Jews and Abortion: Traditions, History, and Values," With the election of a new Supreme Court Justice, it is anticipated that Roe vs. Wade will be revisited. Pro-life Christians have often quoted Old Testament texts to justify their convictions, but as is often the case, Jewish views and values have been ignored. In this talk, Kranson, a professor of Religious Studies at Pitt, will discuss the ways that traditional Jewish texts and classical Jewish thinkers conceptualized the issue of abortion. She will then cover some of the ways that American Jewish lawyers and organizational leaders have built on classical Jewish traditions as they engaged in American reproductive politics. **(November 22)**

Sock Drive Update

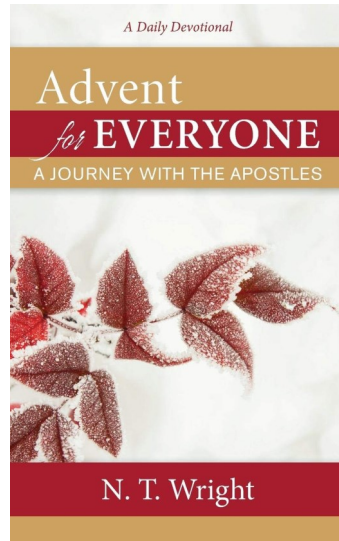
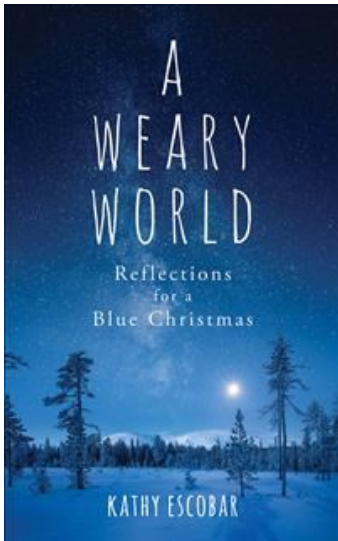
Thank you all so much for your donations! I delivered 125 pair of socks to the Hot Metal Faith Community. They were running low on socks and were very grateful for the donation. I appreciate your support. I hope everyone is staying safe and healthy. —Lizzy Sindhi



Congregational Meeting: November 22

There will be a congregational meeting via Zoom on Sunday, November 22, immediately following the livestream at noon. The purpose of the meeting is to select church officers for 2021 and to approve a new version of the church Charter and By-Laws. By rule, the new version of the By-Laws will be mailed to all member households of the congregation. Please join us!

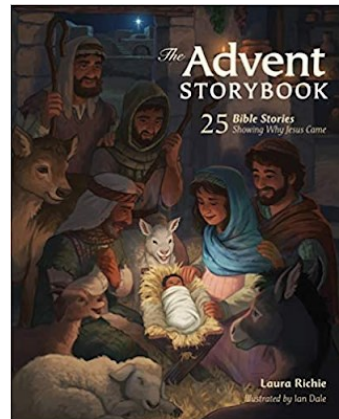
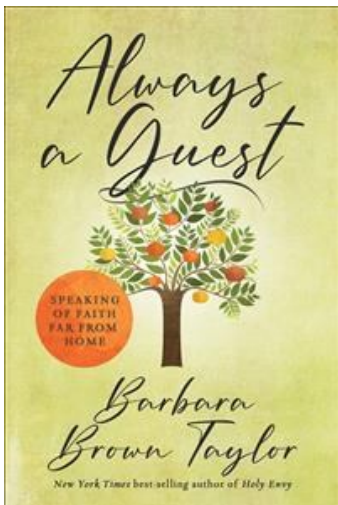
Here are a few suggestions for devotionals and daily readings for Advent! Ask your favorite local bookseller to order one for you.



A Weary World: Reflections for a Blue Christmas by Kathy Escobar: Escobar provides twenty-eight daily reflections paired with prayers and practices to honor our struggles during the holidays.

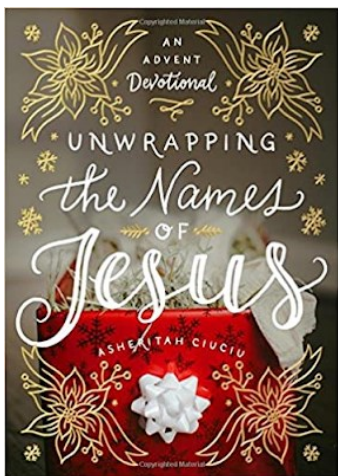
Advent for Everyone: A Journey with the Apostles by N.T. Wright: Biblical scholar and author N. T. Wright provides his own Scripture translation and brief reflection, helping readers understand Advent in the wider context of God's love. Each week discusses key themes for the season: thanksgiving, patience, humility, and joy.

Always a Guest by Barbara Brown Taylor: While this is not an Advent devotional, this collection of stories and sermons of faith, grace, and hope will do well for weekly or daily reading.



The Advent Story Book by Laura Richie: *The Advent Storybook* offers a simple question at the end of each story that helps readers engage in understanding the bigger story God wants us all to know – the good news of Jesus.

Unwrapping the Names of Jesus by Asheritah Ciuciu: This devotional leads readers through the four weeks of Advent (Hope, Preparation, Joy, and Love). Each week includes an interactive family devotional that equips readers to celebrate Advent together, offers five daily reflections that focus on that week's name of Jesus, and includes suggestions for fun-filled family activities or service projects.



God With Us by Katie Pawlack: *God With Us* makes the celebration of Advent simple, memorable, and Gospel-focused. Daily readings correspond with twenty-five symbols from the Old and New Testaments. Short prayers and extension activities provide a flexible and engaging approach to celebrating Advent. Following in the tradition of The Jesse Tree, in the days leading up to Christmas, a tree, banner, or branch is decorated with ornaments depicting symbols from stories in the Bible that point ahead to the lineage and birth of Christ, the long-awaited Messiah. Images of hand-embroidered felt ornaments accompany each day's reading. The appendices at the back of the book list the verses referenced for each reading in full, as well as images of each day's ornament or symbol that can be photocopied and made into ornaments.

For more reading suggestions, visit the Children and Youth blog on our website or click below!

[Advent 2019](#) [Advent 2018](#)

[Advent and Christmas Favorites](#)

Youth Group

The youth group will continue meeting on Thursdays via Zoom. Links to access the Zoom sessions and meeting dates will be sent via email. Contact Jenny Newman at (412) 720-6392 or by email at Jennyrunew@gmail.com for more information.

Sunday School

Sunday school will continue to meet at 10 am via Zoom (check your weekly email for the link). We know this is not ideal as everyone is spending a lot of time online already, but it's our best option to keep us connected until we meet again in person.

We will provide all activities, worksheets, etc. in a downloadable format. If you would prefer to receive things by mail, we can so that, too! Email me at Jennyrunew@gmail.com and let me know. If Zoom Sunday school isn't a good fit for your family, and you want to try the lessons on your own, I can send you the lesson plans with some tips on how to use them.

Peace and Blessings,

Jenny Newman

Notes from the October Session Meeting

(NB: notes from Session are pulled from yet-approved minutes)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Minutes from the September 23rd, 2020 Session meeting were presented to the Session for approval
 - ⇒ **Motion to approve** minutes as read
 - ⇒ **Motion passed** unanimously

CLERK'S REPORT

- Worship YouTube views: 9/27, 47; 10/4, 67; 10/11, 61; 10/18, 32; 10/25, 41

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- FINANCE:** The proposed 2021 budget was presented for review and discussion.
- HOUSE:**
 - Capital Campaign Projects:
 - The Fire Protection System installation project is in the process of obtaining permits from the state of Pennsylvania.
 - Another set of stained glass windows was removed from the sanctuary to be restored.
- STEWARDSHIP:**
 - 2020 quarterly statements were provided to congregation members.
 - 2021 Stewardship pledge cards were mailed home to congregation members.
 - The Session was provided with a financial update from the 2021 Stewardship campaign.
- PERSONNEL:** The personnel committee is working with the church staff to determine their benefit packages as it is currently a period of open enrollment for insurance.
- TOWER UPDATE:**
 - Session reviewed the proposal from Unison regarding the leasing agreement for the cell phone tower on the roof of Sixth Presbyterian church.
 - ⇒ **Motion to accept** the terms of agreement for the Unison leasing agreement for the amount of \$450,000.

⇒ **Motion passed unanimously**

PASTOR'S REPORT AND DEACON'S REPORT

- A brief update was provided to Session regarding members of the congregation who require care and assistance.
- ⇒ **Motion to approve** the Deacons to sponsor a holiday food drive for Wilkinsburg Community Ministry
- ⇒ **Motion passed unanimously**

REOPENING TASK FORCE

- The Reopening Task Force proposed closing the church building to all in-person activities through January 2021.
- Following a discussion, the Session requested more time for consideration and options for reopening before making a vote regarding church activities for the remainder of 2020.
 - ⇒ **Motion to approve** postponing the vote on closing the building for the remainder of 2020 until November 18th, 2020 Session meeting
 - ⇒ **Motion passed unanimously**

NOMINATING REPORT

- The Nominating Committee has a full slate of nominees to present for election at the November 22, 2020 congregational meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

- Charter; By-Law Revision
 - The Session reviewed the changes to the By-Laws and Charter proposed by Elder Bill Moore.
 - ⇒ **Motion to present** revised by-laws to the congregation at the November congregational meeting
 - ⇒ **Motion passed unanimously**
- Statement Against White Supremacy
 - The Session agreed that the Statement Against White Supremacy continue to be revised through the Justice Committee before consideration by the Session.

NEW BUSINESS

- ⇒ **Motion to approve** Congregational Meeting, November 22 at 12:00 PM.
- ⇒ **Motion passed unanimously**
- Congregation members will receive the revised By-Laws, Charter, and nominated officer list by mail before the November 22nd meeting.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**
 - ⇒ **Motion to approve** adult education lecture from Rachel Kranson on November 22, 2020.
 - ⇒ **Motion passed unanimously**.

NEXT MEETING: November 18, 2020

Job Opportunity: Church of the Redeemer, Parish Administrator

The Church of the Redeemer is a growing parish in the East End of Pittsburgh.

We need someone who is organized, takes initiative, and handles concurrent projects. The job is part-time, starting at \$14 an hour with paid sick, personal, and vacation days. The position may expand as the parish grows.

For more information or to send your resume and cover letter, please email redeemerchurch@aol.com. Phone inquiries will not be answered.

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We are an open and affirming community of faith in Jesus Christ. At home in an urban neighborhood of many faiths, we acknowledge that we are not alone on the path to understanding God. In worship, study, and fellowship, we celebrate our Presbyterian roots and find joy in our diversity. We strive for the grace to love one another as we seek a deeper understanding of life in the Spirit, working for justice and serving as stewards of God's wondrous creation.



The deadline for the December newsletter is Nov. 15th. Please email articles and announcements to Amy in the church office (office@sixthchurch.org).

You can also put printed copies on her desk.

Thank you!

Food for Thought...

"All of which is to say, look up the word suffrage in the dictionary. In mine, after noting the main meanings – the privilege of voting, the 'exercise of such a right,' the third interpretation of suffrage is this: 'A short intercessory prayer.' Isn't that beautiful? And true? For what is voting if not a kind of prayer, and what are prayers if not declarations of hope and desire?" – Sarah Vowell

"In one way or another, every wisdom tradition I know says that what we need is here. It's just a matter of opening our eyes and appreciating what I call 'secrets hidden in plain sight.' But we can't do that when we're obsessing about the past or the future, or about what we don't have, or allowing a thousand distractions to prevent us from noticing the gift of 'here and now.'" – Parker Palmer

"Gradually, you will return to yourself,
Having learned a new respect for your heart
And the joy that dwells far within slow time." – John O'Donohue