

January 2021

Sixth Sense

From the Pastor

We are all wishing, hoping, and praying that 2021 will be better than 2020. It is the time for resolutions, and during these days of COVID, I've been thinking anew about what I want – wants that I pray are informed by what God wants.

I want the people I love in this world to trust that I love them; that includes all of you at Sixth.

I want people who work for a living to be able to afford a living.

I want us to take seriously that not everyone is treated the same in this country and that to say so is not political but faithful.

I want leaders to tell the truth, and for the rest of us to expect the truth.

I want children to be safe, and scientists to be believed, and music to be frequent.

I want us to recognize we can't love America while hating Americans.

I want making a buck to be an honorable endeavor, but not an excuse for another's suffering.

I want freedom to be a declaration of my responsibilities more than an assertion of my rights.

I want us to remember that truth is always complex, so you can, for example, support police and still demand an end to brutality; you can protest and still eschew violence.

I want a willingness to sacrifice for the common good to no longer be seen as the life choices of losers, but as something to be admired.

I want friendships to determine how we see the issues, rather than issues determining who our friends are.

continued on page two

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

January Worship and Preaching

January 3 – Ruling Elder
Kate Davoli preaching

January 10 – Mark 1:4-11,
“You Are My Child”

January 17 – Psalm 139:1-
6,13-18, “Thank God For
What We Don’t Know”

January 24 – Mark 1:14-20,
“Heading Out. Wanna
Come Along?”

January 31 – Mark 1:21-28,
“In Their Synagogue”



What the Pastor Is Reading

Hidden Valley Road, Richard
Kolker

Deacon King Kong, James
McBride

I want children to go to schools where they can learn not just skills for a job, but can learn to be adults.

I want kindness to be the power that defines human relationships.

I want us to remember that worship is not just an experience, but a discipline, a regular return to the source of our lives.

I want to be more faithful tomorrow than I was yesterday.

I'm not telling you what you should want. I'm telling you that when I think about Jesus, these are some of the longings that emerge in me. So, do the same. Think about the life of Jesus and ask yourself, "What do I want in 2021?"

Vincent



Updates from the Stewardship Committee

A big THANK YOU to everyone who submitted their 2021 Annual Stewardship Campaign Pledge. As of December 31, we are at \$336,404 – just \$4,178 shy of our Stewardship Campaign Goal of \$340,582. If you still have not submitted your 2021 pledge, please e-mail Amy at office@sixthchurch.org with your pledge amount.

We also want to thank you for your donations to the 2020 Stewardship Campaign. This was a year of economic uncertainty for many, and your fulfillment of your 2020 Stewardship pledge was greatly appreciated. Sixth Presbyterian Church could not continue our ministry and mission without your contributions.

With Gratitude,

The Stewardship Committee

January Birthdays

January 2 Scott Bell

January 3 Rachel Rothenberg

January 11.....Debbie Phillips

Meghan Jones

January 13.....David Myers-Newbury

January 18.....Jennifer Joy

January 26.....Vicki Guy

Welcome, New Members!

At the December meeting, the Session received Jessica Craft, Carlos Omar Rivera-Morales, and Andrew Swensen into membership at Sixth Church. We look forward to seeing all of you when we're able to be together again.



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

Chris Berg: Just ate a nacatamele and plan to make some this Thursday with Sara. Watching trashy apocalyptic sci fi. Currently watching *Waterworld*.

Cosy Cornelius-Bates: Watching the new season of *Hilda*! Reading *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate* with the kids and watching all the Christmas books and movies. I'm reading *Vera Kelly Is Not a Mystery*. Playing evolution the board game and other people are enjoying Super Smash Brothers.

Kate Davoli: I'm head-down in sermon writing

Sara DeLucia: Partying (by ourselves), cuz it's birthday month plus Christmas in our house.

Kirk Howe: Editing videos for the Christmas Eve service! [ed. note: Kirk is editing so many videos for so many services!]

Kate Kennedy: Nelson DeMille (!!!!) and Mia Sheridan

Lori King: currently sifting through books that had been stored in my parents' attic. However, the book I am looking forward to reading in January is *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life* by Eric Klinenberg.

Jenn McCartney: Chris Tyndall and Bob Hoffman have a decade worth of Sixth Christmas pageants I have been slowly watching from the '90s with them. Some of our current members are caught on video in full '90s garb at it's finest. Shockingly, the pageant storyline doesn't change over the years.

Verna Robinson: Watched *Mulan* last night. The new one. Love it!! Let's hear it for people who do not fit social expectations. Let's celebrate the gifts they bring to us.

Lesa Rosamond: I read *The Searcher* by Tana French, *A Song for the Dark Times* by Ian Rankin, *Hercule Poirot's Christmas* by Agatha Christie, *Fallout* by Sara Paretsky, and *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens

Heather Vallone: COVID stress has made it so I can't concentrate on anything, so baking shows on Netflix are streaming 24/7 in this house right now!

Amy Whipple: Super recommend Jaye Robin Brown's *Georgia Peaches and Other Forbidden Fruit*, a young adult novel with a Christian lesbian protagonist. It's a really lovely book for something of a niche market.

Notes from the December Session Meeting

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

CLERK'S REPORT

- Worship (YouTube views): 11/22: 65; 11/29: 66; 12/6: 80; 12/13: 207; separate Pageant video: 245
- Annual committee reports were requested in January 2021 for February newsletter

⇒ Motion to approve the following:

- The rotating of officers on July 1, 2021
- Erik Fogt as Church Treasurer for 2021
- Joe Ashenden as Clerk of Session for 2021
- The scheduling of the Annual Meeting of the Congregation for Sunday, January 31 at noon
⇒ **All motions were passed** unanimously

⇒ Motion to approve the following as the Officers of the Corporation for 2021 by extending their 2020 terms until the rotation of church leadership in July 2021:

- Mary Radcliffe to be the President
- Leslie Kaplan to be the Vice-President,
- Carol Emerson to be the Secretary
⇒ **All motions passed** unanimously

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

- The Session welcomed new members:
 - Andrew Swensen by letter of transfer
 - Jessica Craft, by letter of transfer
 - Carlos Rivera Morales by profession of faith with a baptism pending due to COVID-19.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

• FINANCE:

- The November financial report was presented for discussion by Finance Chair Mary Radcliffe.
- It was so ordered that finance chair Mary Radcliffe will generate drafts of the 2021 church budget for review by the executive committee. The executive committee will select a draft budget to be presented to the entire Session at the January 27th 2020 meeting.

• STEWARDSHIP:

- Stewardship chair Beth Hazlett reported that the 2020 stewardship goal will be met by the end of December 2020.

• HOUSE:

- Elders Leslie Kaplan and Greg Winner reported the following updates:
- The third stained glass window is in the process of being restored as part of the capital campaign.
- The damage caused by a leak in the Verizon tower will be fixed this month by Verizon.
- Greg Winner will be communicating with Julie Mull regarding the request to use the building for a Boy Scout troop.

• PERSONNEL:

- ⇒ **Motion to approve** the Pastor's request for vacation from December 25 to January 4.
⇒ **Motion passed** unanimously

- **TOWER UPDATE:**

- The Presbytery has approved the letter of agreement for the tower lease agreement.
- The Session is still waiting to receive a net profit agreement and letter of appeasement to continue this process.

PASTOR'S REPORT AND DEACON'S REPORT

- A brief update was provided to Session regarding members of the congregation who require care and assistance.

REOPENING TASK FORCE

- The reopening task force will begin to work with the worship committee to restructure worship for the time when the building will be reopened.
 - ⇒ **Motion to approve** keeping the building closed until the next session meeting on January 27, 2020
 - ⇒ **Motion passed** unanimously

- **NEW BUSINESS AND COMMITTEE INFORMATION**

- Alliance for Police Accountability
 - Schuyler Stupica presented information about two ballot initiatives in Allegheny county as well as the work by the Alliance for Police Accountability (APA) to acquire signatures in order to qualify the initiatives for the May 2021 election
 - ⇒ **Motion to approve** supporting the Justice Team's effort to work with the APA ballot initiative as well as providing the Justice Team space in the January newsletter and, if they can find an appropriate and safe way, allow for use of church property to collect signatures.
 - ⇒ **Motion passed** unanimously
- Christian Education Committee:
 - ⇒ **Motion to approve** the Sunday school offering "When in Romans: An Invitation to Linger with the Gospel according to Paul"
 - ⇒ **Motion passed** unanimously
- Worship Committee
 - ⇒ **Motion to approve** the changing of the January date of communion from January 3rd, 2020 to January 10th 2020.
 - ⇒ **Motion passed** unanimously

NEXT MEETING: January 27, 2021

Alliance for Police Accountability

At the Session's December meeting, our elders authorized our church's Justice Team to collect signatures for two ballot initiatives of the Alliance for Police Accountability (APA). Beginning December 29 and concluding on February 16, in conjunction with Pittsburgh United, the Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network, Sisters Pittsburgh, APA needs to collect 30,000 signatures to get 2 initiatives on the ballot in May. One initiative is to end the practice of solitary confinement at the Alleghany County Jail, and the other initiative is to end the "no-knock warrant," known around the country as the Breonna Taylor law.

If you already want to sign the petitions, you can click on the link [Sign the petition \(apa-pgh.org/ballotquestions\)](https://apa-pgh.org/ballotquestions). If you would like to help our efforts to get as many community signatures as possible, please contact a Justice Team member for more information (Peter Kaplan, Peter Gilmore, Tom Twiss, Marnie Bertolet, Pam Howe, Mary Crossley, Vincent Kolb). Stay tuned for announcements in January worship for how you can help us in this work. It is one way we can make the message on our church sign a reality, that "Black Lives Matter."

Christian Education Updates

Virtual Sunday School for preschool through sixth grade will resume on Sundays at 10 am beginning January 10.

Virtual Youth Group will be meeting on Thursday from 6 to 7:30 pm beginning January 7.

All Zoom links will be sent via email. Please contact Jenny Newman at Jennyrunew@gmail.com if you need a link.

Adult Sunday School Offering

When in Romans: An Invitation to Linger with the Gospel according to Paul, Beverly Roberts Gaventa. On Sundays at 9:45 am, starting January 10, Pastor Vincent will lead this study of Romans that is both scholarly and accessible, ancient and contemporary, theological and pastoral. Gaventa is a popular New Testament scholar who has taught at Baylor and Princeton Theological Seminary. No previous knowledge of the Bible necessary. Join us!

Children's Response to Violence – Free Workshop

Blessed Be Educators invites you to the second workshop in a three-part series on violence. Learn how children and teenagers sometimes respond differently to acts of violence. How does family and community violence impact a child's mental health and emotional development? Why is the rate of suicide among teens rising? This workshop includes resources for parents and educators.

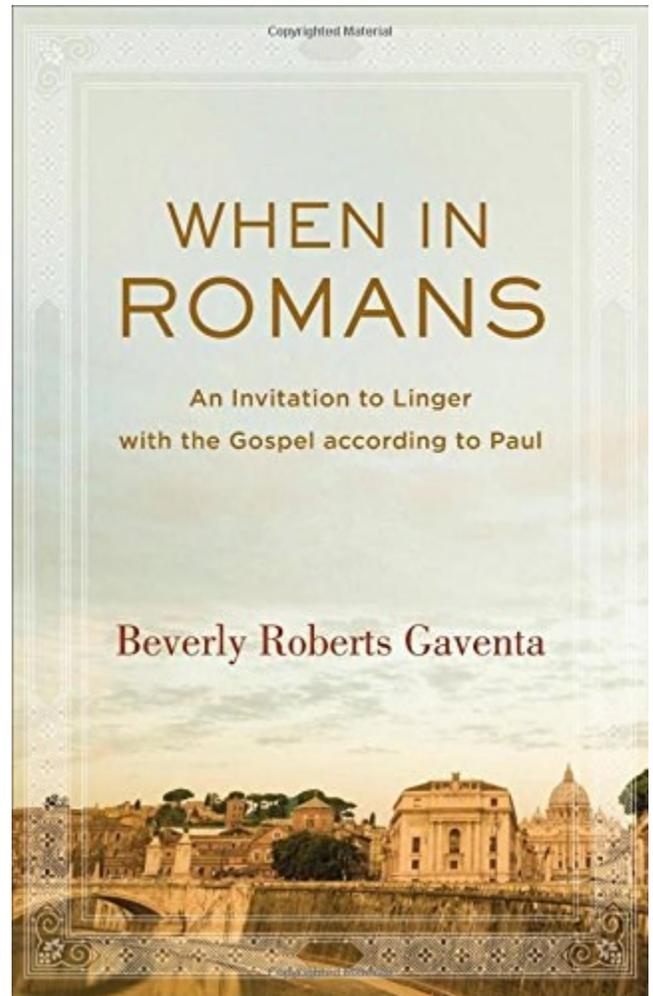
Saturday, January 9th, 2021 from 10:00am - 12:00pm. Registration is online (see link) and a Zoom link will be sent to your email 10 minutes before the start of the workshop.

Presenters include:

- Dr. Paula Marie Powe: Child/ Adolescent Psychiatrist & Medical Director Matilda Theiss Early Childhood and School-Based Behavioral Health Center
- Gina Pelusi: Everytown Survivor and Media Lead

Nicole Molinaro: President/ CEO, Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh

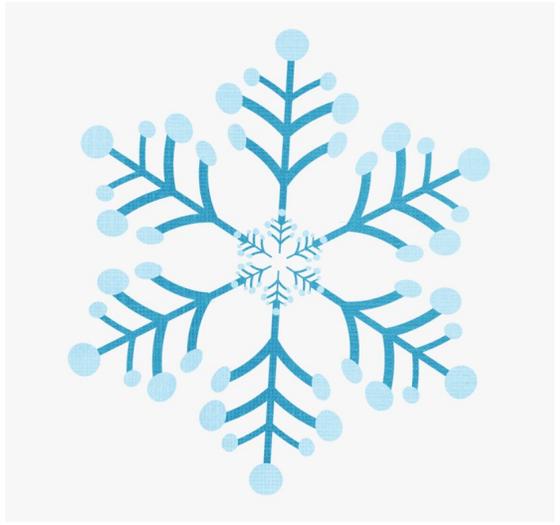
Register at: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/childrens-responses-to-violence-tickets-129421831181?fbclid=IwAR1SZr9oEfaCxu3qGdjzWksStFqwNNir7E-V2X133rOADtApWCI_nflpwc





Screenshots from the November 2020 Congregational Meeting

A note from Amy: y'all. I cannot imagine going through a pandemic without each and every one of you. Whether emails, phone calls, Bible study, Sunday school, THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING!, even seeing your names on offerings...I feel so enormously connected and grateful for Sixth as both a place of work and worship. I'm grateful, too, for how much grace I've received – and have seen given to others – as we try to have some semblance of functioning each day. Like, come on. Who gets to be this lucky? Seriously. It's absurd. I very much look forward to when we can be together again, but, in the meantime, I wouldn't want to have this experience any other way or with anyone else but you.



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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 February newsletter is Jan. 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...

i thank You God for most this amazing
day:for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky;and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday;this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings:and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any – lifted from the no
of all nothing – human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

– e.e. cummings