

July and August 2021

# Sixth Sense

## From the Pastor

I have been reading a lot lately about the rationale that people employ to refuse a vaccine for COVID-19. Given that they more than likely do not think the way I do about the world, I thought it would be good to delve into the way someone else sees things. What comes through in all the literature is that people seldom grasp the far-ranging consequences of their individual choices. While they hope and believe and have confidence that their immune systems are strong enough to protect them, some never make the connection that their decision to go ahead and get the vaccine could actually help grandma or grandpa. In summarizing his interviews with people who refuse vaccines, Derek Thompson remarked, "The United States suffers from a deficit of imagining the lives of other people." ("Millions Are Saying No to the Vaccines. What Are They Thinking?", *The Atlantic*, 5/3/21)

That sentence in a nutshell describes the tension of living in the center of the American empire and seeking to be something of a follower of Jesus Christ. We are called to look not just to our own interests, but the interests of others Jesus says, but daily in America, we are bombarded with the message to look out only for ourselves, to further our own agendas and interests, that we are free to do what we want, when we want, without regard to the consequences.

As Lily Tomlin once said, "The trouble with the rat race is that even if you win, you're still a rat."

Daily, we are invited by Jesus into an abundant life that has nothing to do with the American Dream. That dream of self-sufficiency, wealth, and insulation daily entices me. But the call of the new human being, Jesus Christ, is that there is a more excellent way.

Let us continue this summer to help each other to live the life that truly is life.

Happy Summer!  
Vincent

## What the Pastor Is Reading

Seminary Journal, 1983-1985

*The Beauty in Breaking*, Michelle Harper



SIXTH  
*presbyterian*  
CHURCH

## July and August Worship and Preaching

July 4 – Mark 6:1-6, "It Is Good to Be Home"

July 11 – Ruling Elder Kate Davoli preaching

July 18 – Ruling Elder Kate Davoli preaching

July 25 – Rev. Michael Holohan, Pastor, Commonwealth of Oakland, preaching

August 1 – Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15, "Give Us This Day Our Daily Bug Juice"

August 8 – Ruling Elder Kate Davoli preaching

August 15 – Rev. Sarah Robbins preaching

August 22 – Erin Angeli, Pastoral Associate for Queer & Neighborhood Ministries, Commonwealth of Oakland, preaching

August 29 – Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23, "Tongues"

**See inside for details about in-person worship!**

# What In-Person Worship Is Like

We are thrilled to once again share our space with you, and we encourage anyone who prefers to join our livestream instead to continue to do so.

Everyone involved in making this decision — Staff, Session, Worship Committee, Reopening Task Force — have been looking to this happy time, and we hope that it will be meaningful for you, even with the few restrictions that make it possible. Worship will continue as outlined below throughout the summer, and we will continue to monitor changing rates of community spread as well as Allegheny County restrictions.

## **CDC Guidelines/Masking**

EVERYONE is asked to wear a mask, whether vaccinated or not. Please make sure your mask covers both your nose and your mouth. We will have masks available for those who forget to bring one.

## **Childcare**

No childcare is offered at this time. Children must stay with their families during the service and anyone aged two years or older must wear a mask. The nursery area is closed.

## **Arrival**

The doors open at 9:45 am. The worship service begins promptly at 10 am. We ask that, as the weather allows, you wait outside. The Chapel is also be available as a gathering place.

## **Entrance**

Please enter through the Murray Avenue door or the door connected to the ramp. There is no entry or exit (except in an emergency) through the Forbes Avenue doors.

## **Registration**

We ask that everyone please fill out the friendship pad and leave it in the pew. We will use that information for contact tracing as needed.

## **Seating**

While distancing is not required, we do encourage people to leave space as attendance allows and to be mindful of people's continued need for distance.

## **Worship**

You are able to participate in unison prayers, affirmations, and responsive readings. You are able to sing the hymns! Only those who are presenting aspects of the service (Pastor Vincent, the liturgist) will be unmasked while they are speaking.

What's different? There are not any individual prayers or sharing of celebrations and concerns. Remember that the service is available to anyone who wants to watch it, and there are privacy issues involved with regard to specifics. Also, understand that you are there as part of a "studio audience."

## **Socializing**

Clearly, everyone is very anxious to share greetings and news with friends who we have not seen in months. But when the chimes ring three times, it means that the livestream has begun, and those worshipping live will need to switch to respectful silence.

You are welcome to socialize after the service, and please be mindful that some people may not yet be comfortable touching or getting close.

## **Food/Beverages**

We are not be providing coffee or other refreshments after worship.

### Offering

We are collecting the offering via donation boxes placed at the entrances to the sanctuary.

### Contact Tracing

If you test positive after attending a service, please let us know right away so we can do contact tracing.

### Self-Screening

For everyone's safety, we ask that you please stay home from worship if you or anyone in your household has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 10 days, or if anyone is currently experiencing or has experienced COVID-19 symptoms in the past seven days, including fever, trouble breathing, shortness of breath, flu-like symptoms, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, headache, chills, or muscle pain. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, we encourage you to talk your doctor and be tested.

## July and August Birthdays

July 2 ..... Brenda Flores

July 6 ..... Virginia McQuown

Heather Vallone

July 7 ..... Malena Howe

July 9 ..... Melynda Nestor

Kurt Thompson

July 12.....Joseph Ashenden

July 14.....Carole Anderson

July 15.....Cyndi Dickson

July 18.....Nathan Cooper

July 20.....Pamela Bower

July 24.....Olivia McCann

July 29.....Thoren Vaux

July 31.....Cheryl Kubelick

August 1 ..... Checkers Delabar

Julie Mull

Gregson Vaux

August 3 ..... John Sennott

August 5 ..... Norma Farquhar

August 7 ..... Verna Robinson

August 8 ..... Chris McDonald

August 10.....Nora Johnson

August 11.....Anna Watt-Morse

August 12.....Denise DeJong

Beverly Gaddy

August 14.....Paul Watt- Morse

August 15.....Kathi Robinson-Dassell

August 17.....Dee Hunter

Josh Lowe

August 19.....Lesa Rosamond

August 21.....Olivia Van Dyke

August 23.....Malcolm Juring

August 24.....Dante McDonald

August 25.....Dex Guyette

August 29.....Myra Kazanjian

Chris Sennott

August 30.....Robin Bower



## Christian Education Update

Hello! I hope that everyone is enjoying summer thus far! I am so thankful that we are moving toward the light at the end of the tunnel!

We have returned to in-person worship with some restrictions and I am looking forward to when we will be resuming our in-person offerings for children and youth. We are hoping and planning for that to be in September provided that it is safe for us to do so.

The Christian Education Committee will meet over the summer and we will be working with the re-opening task force on what protocols we will put in place and how we will safely welcome young people in our space.

In addition to the church nursery, Sunday School, Extended Session, and high school youth group, we are hoping to organize a middle school (5th through 8th) youth group.

I have created a registration for children and youth. Please complete it for each young person in your household. The registration information will be helpful to us as we plan for fall in regards to Sunday school class divisions, staff, and volunteers that will be needed. We are also making sure our church records are up to date!

Thank you! The link is below and can also be accessed on our church website.

[Children and Youth  
Registration](#)

Peace and Blessings,  
Jenny Newman



*We are having a birthday party...  
For everyone!*



**We've all had a pandemic birthday....**

Children, youth, and their families are invited to join us to celebrate our birthdays together! We will provide cupcakes, snacks, beverages, and other birthday party supplies. Come join us for crafts and games as we celebrate everyone!

**August 29  
3 to 5 p.m.**

**Prospect Shelter in Schenley Park**



**RSVP to [Jennyrunew@gmail.com](mailto:Jennyrunew@gmail.com)**

Masks are required for adults who are unvaccinated.  
Masks for children will be at the discretion of parents.



**Sixth Presbyterian Church**

# Play in the Park

**Children, youth, and their families are invited to join us to gather and play in the park! We will provide water, snacks, crafts, group games and activities. Come and hang out with us!**

**July 11  
Noon to 3 p.m.**

**Prospect Shelter in Schenley Park**

**RSVP to [Jennyrunew@gmail.com](mailto:Jennyrunew@gmail.com)**

Masks are required for adults who are unvaccinated.  
Masks for children will be at the discretion of parents.



## Worship in the Park





## More Worship in the Park and In-Person Worship (!)





# Miscellaneous Updates

**Weekly Bible Study:** Pastor Vincent's weekly Bible study is on summer break and will resume September 8

**Volunteers Needed:** We are in need of volunteers aplenty. Contact the head of each role for more information. (You can be more than one kind of volunteer!)

Ushers: Mary Lang (mlang6371@aol.com)

Liturgists: Pam Bower / church office (pamelabower@aol.com / office@sixthchurch.org)

Building Closers: Leslie Kaplan (bezbeads@verizon.net)

**Building Use:** Starting July 1, church committees and outside groups are welcome to resume meeting inside the building. Contact the office to reserve space / get on the calendar.



## News from El Porvenir

The people of El Porvenir wanted me to share these pictures, showing what they did with some of the money we sent through Church & Community. They replaced their damaged water tanks and built the cement walls to hold them. The pictures show the people from the community filling their water jugs to take for their daily use. They also plan on purchasing and distributing baskets full of staples such as rice, beans and oil for about 40 families.

—Sara Berg



# Capital Campaign Update

We are mid-way through the Sixth Presbyterian Church Five-Year Capital Campaign Pledge fulfillment. We thought this would be a good time to give you a project and mission update since many of you so generously have pledged and contributed to our Capital Campaign.

## **Projects that have been completed so far:**

- Renovation of the downstairs kitchen and dishwasher room
- Repairing and painting the Ridinger room ceiling beams
- Sanding and repainting all the outside ironwork railings
- Concrete work: replacing some of the front concrete steps down to Forbes Avenue; replacing half of the wall at the base of the hill; pouring a new patio at the back to replace the crumbling pavers
- Renovation of the handicap ramp: fixing cracks, replacing block, re-caulking the surface and edges
- Renovation of the second-floor bathroom to make it accessible: automatic door, repainting, removing partition, lowering mirror
- Windows completed: the two Murray Ave. side double lancets completed, one reinstalled and the other to be reinstalled late June/early July. The Murray Ave. side four-lancet is also completed and reinstalled
- Purchasing and training for the stair climber machine

## **Remaining projects are:**

- Renovation of the Chapel: new folding chairs and rack, sound abatement panels, electric screen and projector, additional large Bulletin Board, painting, picture rail, better enclosures for the heating system
- Four windows in the sanctuary
- Changing table for downstairs bathroom sized for older children / adults

## **Mission:**

As you know, 5% of the Capital Campaign contributions are going to mission. Clean Air Council; Pittsburgh United; Wilkinsburg Community Ministry; and SistersPgh are the designees of the Capital Campaign mission dollars. We make the donations after the close of each calendar year, donating to those organizations a total of 5% of what was contributed the prior year. At the beginning of 2021, we had received Capital Campaign contributions totaling \$627,522.94 for the prior three years. To date, \$31,376.15 has been donated to our mission organizations.

We have also donated 52 of the chapel chairs to Construction Junction.

None of this work to preserve the 100-year legacy and presence of Sixth Presbyterian Church in our diverse community of Squirrel Hill could have been done without you and your generous support. Thank you.

— The Stewardship and Capital Campaign Committees



# Committee and Initiative Restructuring

During the May 2021 meeting, the Session approved the following restructuring proposal (a full description of committees and their responsibilities is available in the Administrative Manual).

## Overview

As a council of the church, the Session has the authority to designate such committees and commissions as it deems necessary for the accomplishment of the mission of the church. (G 3.0109).

## Powers of Committees

Committees of the Session are empowered to consider and conclude matters referred to it by the Session.

## Committee Membership

All members of Session must serve on a committee during their time on Session.

The following committees must be chaired by a current Session member:

- Personnel
- House
- Finance
- Stewardship
- Nominating

If the following committees are not chaired by a Session member, then a Session member should serve on that committee as a designated Session representative:

- Church and Community
- Christian Education
- Worship

Turnover in committee leadership is encouraged, and outgoing chairs should make sure to pass on all materials relating to the committee to the incoming chair.

The committee chair has the power to convene and conduct the meetings of the committee and to set its agenda in consultation with the Pastor. The committee chair is responsible for reporting on the work of the committee at each stated meeting of the Session.

Committee chairs are empowered by Session to recruit volunteers/new committee members and others as needed to accomplish goals and projects.

# Notes from the June Session Meeting

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

## RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING CLASS

- The Session offered a prayer of gratitude and recognized the service of the Class of 2020 Session members including Pam Bower, Leslie Kaplan, Mary Radcliffe, Bill Moore and Greg Winner.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Minutes from the May 26th 2021 Session meeting were presented to the Session for approval
  - ⇒ **Motion to approve** the May Session meeting minutes as written
  - **Motion passed** unanimously

## CLERK'S REPORT

- Worship: 5/30, 61 (YouTube); 6/6 (picnic), ~80; 6/13, 68 (YouTube); 6/20, 64 (in-person), 35 (YouTube)

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- **FINANCE:**
  - The May financial report was presented for discussion by Finance Chair Frank Davoli. There were no questions.
- **STEWARDSHIP:**
  - A written report was submitted to the Session for review from the Stewardship committee. A Stewardship summer check-in letter was sent to congregation contributors.
- **HOUSE:**
  - The annual fire safety check was completed in June 2021. No fire safety issues were noted at that time.
  - The third set of stained glass windows from the church sanctuary were reinstalled in June 2021 as part of the capital campaign.
- **PERSONNEL:**
  - There were no updates to report to the Session in the month of June from the Personnel committee.
- **REOPENING TASK FORCE**
  - Elder Pam Howe reported on the success of the first in-person worship service held inside the church building on 6/20/2021.
  - Worship services will continue to be simultaneously live-streamed and held in-person with COVID-19 safety protocols through August 2021.
  - The Session approved deputizing the Reopening Task Force and the church staff to make decisions related to in-person worship protocols as needed during the summer of 2021.



## **2021 GOALS:**

- The Session reviewed the 2021 goals that are currently in progress and/or have been completed including:
- Implement Safe Return to In-Person Ministry
- Implement Safe Return to In-Person/Hybrid Sunday School, Youth Group, and Extended Session, Applying Feedback and Findings from Revisioning Process.
- Decide & Implement Future Livestream
- Develop an Annual Plan for Long-Term Stewardship Communication
- Complete Remaining Capital Projects (except Sanctuary Windows)
- Implement Mid-Year Officer Transition
- Restructure Session Committees
- Develop and Implement a Time & Talent Solicitation for Stewardship
- Complete Financial Review

## **CHAIR AND COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:**

- The Session reviewed chair and committee assignments to establish new leadership roles and ensure compliance with the updated procedural manual. The chair and committee assignments at the time of the June Session meeting are as follows:
  - Christian Education: Linda May, Joe Ashenden
  - Church & Community: Larry Chan
  - Earth Care:
  - Fellowship: Jan Myers-Newbury
  - Finance: Frank Davoli
  - Gun Safety: Lori Swensson
  - House: Gregory Winner, Tom Juring
  - More Light: Kit Ayars
  - Nominating: Kit Ayars
  - Personnel: Phyllis Rupert
  - Justice Team:
  - Stewardship: Beth Hazlett, Carol Emerson
  - Worship: Pam Howe, Mary Lang

## **DEACONS CARE LIST**

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

## OLD BUSINESS

- In order to continue the discussion around the appropriateness of congregational appeals in worship for specific votes for ballot initiatives, the Session reviewed the rationale for the appeal from the Justice Team.
- Despite the Justice Team's rationale, the Session determined that specific appeals for votes need to be couched in the language of personal testimony, with encouragement from others to concur.

## COMMITTEE MINUTES

- Christian Education
  - The Session members were reminded of their responsibilities as mandated reporters within the state of Pennsylvania as leaders within the church. A training module was provided to the Session members related to mandated reporting
- Gun Safety
  - The Gun Safety Committee at Sixth Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh is reaching out to religious communities to form partnerships to prevent gun violence through written correspondence.
    - ⇒ **Motion to approve** the Gun Safety committee using Sixth Presbyterian Church letterhead when sending written correspondence.
  - **Motion passed** unanimously
- Worship:
  - ⇒ **Motion to approve** the following guest preachers to fill the pulpit in the absence of the Pastor this summer as recommended by the Worship committee:
    - July 11-Ruling Elder Kate Davoli
    - July 18-Ruling Elder Kate Davoli
    - July 25-Rev. Michael Holohan, Pastor, Commonwealth of Oakland
    - August 8-Ruling Elder Kate Davoli
    - August 15- Rev. Michael Holohan, Pastor, Commonwealth of Oakland
    - August 22-Erin Angeli, Pastoral Associate for Queer and Neighborhood Ministries, Commonwealth of Oakland
    - **Motion passed** unanimously
  - ⇒ **Motion to approve** the reimbursement of Kate Davoli through an honorarium for pulpit supply
  - **Motion passed** unanimously
  - The Worship Committee recommends that the Session withhold a decision about an in-person celebration of the Lord's Supper until the August 2021 Session meeting.

**NEXT MEETING:** August 29, 2021 at 7 pm.



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

Kit Ayars: *Valentine* by Elizabeth Wetmore. Strong women abound.

Kate Davoli: Sermon writing for the 11th and 18th... How do people do this every week??!

Kirk Howe: The usual, playing music: <https://youtu.be/Hofuhd7heiI>

Kate Kennedy: Reading all of Julie Garwood's books

Lori King: Reading *Soul Food* by Adrian Miller and *The Potlikker Papers* by John T Edge

John McCall: I am well into *Lincoln on the Verge* by Ted Widner, a fascinating account of the former president's twelve-day journey by train in 1861 from Illinois to Washington DC for his inauguration as our 16th president. This portrayal enables me to better see Abe as a real person beyond the icon I grew up with.

Maggie Ritchey: Just read Elizabeth Warren's new book, *Persist*. Great ideas!!!!

Dawn Rozzo: Glenda and I are watching *Young and the Restless* and *Bold and the Beautiful*

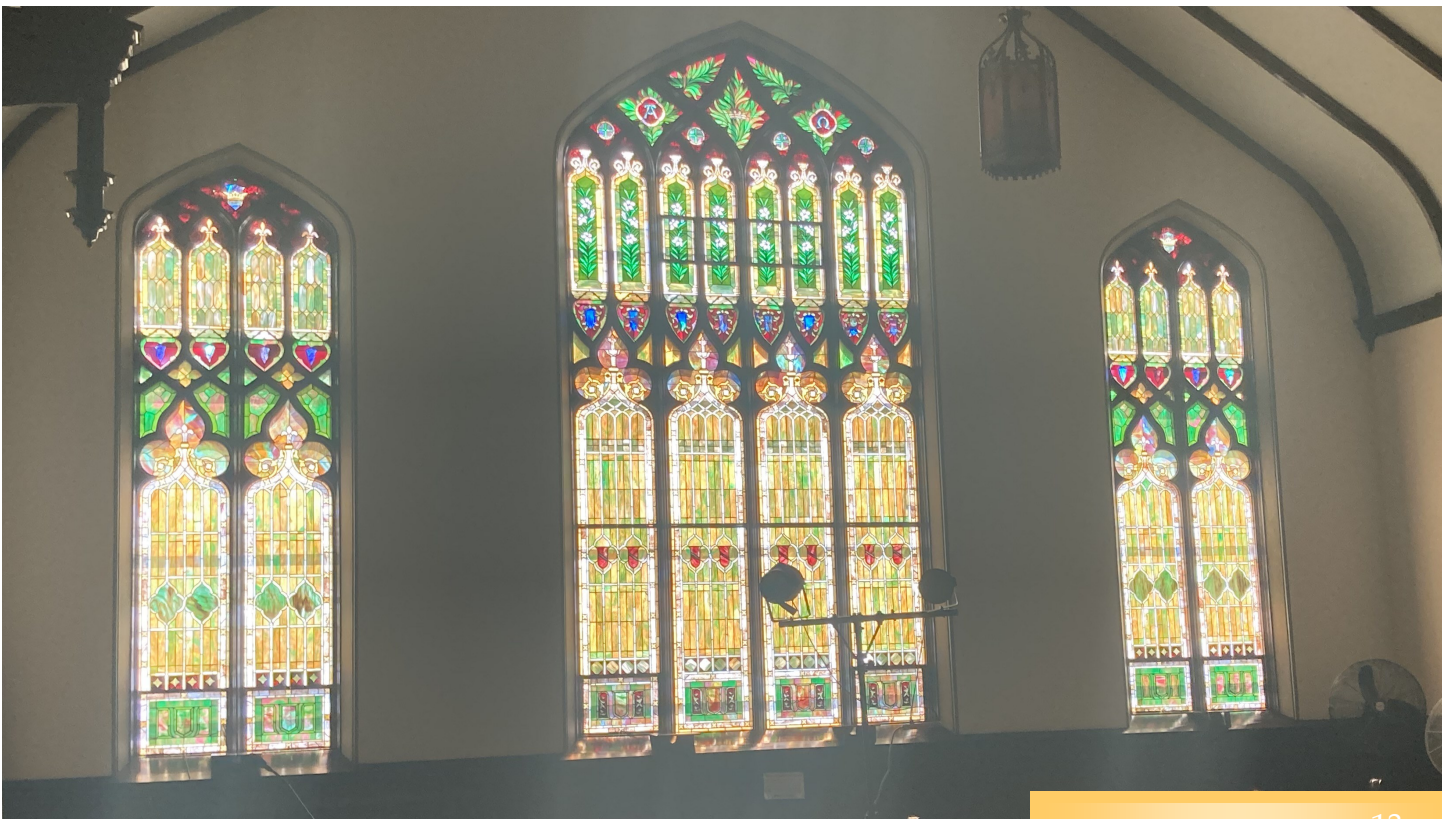
Jenny Ruth: Tonight I just finished Walter Isaacson's *The Code Breaker*...it's fascinating! (You can also use it as a doorstep)

Hannah Ryan: Watching *Station 19*

Heather Vallone: Watching *Sweet Tooth*!

Amy Whipple: I don't want to brag, but I finished rewatching 18 seasons of *Degrassi*

## A Wall of Restored Windows!



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Pittsburgh, PA 15217  
412-421-2752  
office@sixthchurch.org  
www.sixthchurch.org

**Dated Material – Do Not Hold**  
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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 September newsletter is August 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...

"My heart is moved by all I cannot save:  
so much has been destroyed

I have to cast my lot with those  
who age after age, perversely,

with no extraordinary power,  
reconstitute the world." – Adrienne Rich

"Always keep mint on your windowsill in August, to ensure that buzzing flies will stay outside, where they belong. Don't think the summer is over, even when roses droop and turn brown and the stars shift position in the sky. Never presume August is a safe or reliable time of year. It is the season of reversals, when birds no longer sing in the morning and the evenings are made of equal parts golden light and black clouds. The rock-solid and the tenuous can easily exchange places until everything you know can be questioned and put into doubt." – Alice Hoffman