

December 2021

Sixth Sense

From the Pastor

The season of Advent is upon us, and as people of faith, that means we are called to be different in the world. In a world of immediate gratification, we revel in waiting, waiting for the One who is the fulfillment of God's promise, the fulfillment of hope, the declaration that we have been redeemed.

We are called to be a people of hope. This does not mean that we are naïve; we are fully aware of how the world continues to be filled with pain and sorrow. We know that hatred and violence continue to exist. We know that death and separation continue to be a part of our lives. But because we are an Advent people, we know that none of these things will win in the end. The Holy One is coming, to make holy once again all that was, is, and ever will be.

And in our waiting and our hoping, we work and worship, pray and play, in all things hoping that peace, love and joy will reign in our lives and in our world, now and forever. I pray that you might savor a hope filled season of waiting that is Advent.

Vincent



SIXTH
presbyterian
CHURCH

December Worship and Preaching

December 5 – Luke 3:1-18,
“Metanoia”

December 12 – Matthew 11:2
-15, “Disappointment
Comes For Everyone”

December 19 – Luke 1:39-55,
“None of Us Does This
Alone”

December 24 – Luke 2:1-20,
“A Heart for the Hurting
Times”

December 26 – Luke 2:41-52,
“Losing Jesus”

What the Pastor Is Reading

*The Solace of Fierce
Landscapes: Exploring Desert
& Mountain Spirituality,*
Belden C. Lane

*Wintering: The Power of Rest
& Retreat in Difficult Times,*
Katherine May

Bewilderment, Richard
Powers

A Farewell Message from Gail

Dear Members of Sixth Presbyterian Church,

This is my last month, my last December as your Director of Music, in fact as a Director of Music. My retirement starts on January 1, 2022. Many of you have asked what I will do when I retire. Honestly, I do not know and am too busy in the present finishing the work that needs to be done in both of my professional lives. The future will make itself known to me; I am sure.

I have spent more time during the past 6 months looking behind rather than ahead and reflecting on my working life that is coming to an end. I have been blessed to have a rich professional life, even though it has not always been smooth or gone the way I expected. As many of you have experienced in your life, things do not go exactly as we plan or envision.

When I graduated from Concordia Teacher's College (now University) in River Forest, Illinois (an urban suburb of Chicago, right next to Oak Park), I got my first job teaching third grade in a Lutheran School in Detroit. The school was in the city limits, right next to Grosse Pointe; I could ride my bike to Lake St. Clair. It was at this Lutheran School that my love affair with music/church music began, not in college where I ran away from every practice room and had no time for the many choirs the college offered.

Because I had been involved in music most of my life before Detroit--despite no formal participation at Concordia --I was assigned all the kids' choirs (three, from first to eighth grade) and quickly joined the adult choir of the associated church. I became fast friends with the choir director and organist, a husband/wife team. They encouraged me and the next thing I knew, I was practicing the organ after school. The husband/wife team had both attended Valparaiso University in Indiana, so when it was time for me to return to school, that is where I went. My life became immersed in music (practice, practice, practice, read, read, read) and specifically, church music (sing, sing, sing, lead singing/organ, lead singing/voice, lead singing/conduct). My goal was to become a church musician.

Forty years later, that is exactly what I have been, although I never expected to be in Pittsburgh or spend most of my career in the Presbyterian Church. I also never expected to become an administrator and work in the arts community. I have spent the last 25-plus years here at Sixth, and it is here that I have fulfilled my 25-year-old self's ambition. How cool is that?



It has been my joy and honor to serve as your Director of Music. Beginning with John McCall and ending with Vincent Kolb as the pastors who bookended my time here, I have been more blessed than I ever thought possible. And the choir. What can I say about the choir that you do not already know? Week after week, month after month, year after year they have dedicated themselves to the joy of singing. We have all benefitted from the results. In addition, they have offered me friendship and support.

Now we are aging, and although change is difficult, nothing lasts forever. I am past retirement age and feel strongly that it is time for me to pass on this wonderful "job" to someone new, someone younger who has yet to benefit from being a part of Sixth Presbyterian Church.

God bless you all and thank you for your love and support.

Gail

Family Advent Tree

Beginning with the first Sunday in Advent, an additional Christmas Tree will be placed in the sanctuary. All church members and families are invited to bring an ornament to decorate the tree. Make and ornament together or bring in a family favorite. If you are not attending in-person worship feel free to send us an ornament or drop one off (please make sure they are marked somewhere with your name.) We are looking forward to seeing our tree come to life!



December Sunday School and Youth Group Schedule

Sunday School

Sundays, December 5, 12, and 19 at 10 am

Thursdays, December 2, 9, and 16 at 6 pm

Youth Group

Thursdays, December 2, 9, and 16 at 6:30 pm

Zoom meetings links will be sent via email. Stay tuned for our annual Sunday School Christmas pageant that will be presented virtually and posted online on December 19.

Carols on the Steps

Everyone is invited to gather on the front steps of the church to share hot chocolate and Christmas carols at **4 pm on Sunday, December 12.**

(Alternate date for inclement weather will be Sunday, December 19)

All the Things for Advent 2021!

Here we are again at Advent! Things feel a little strange this year as we are still navigating the pandemic. Peace and blessings to you all as we enter this Advent season with caution and hope.

If you are attending worship with us in person, please stop by the Chapel and check out the resources for Advent that are available for you to take home. There are advent calendars and devotionals available to take you through Advent. I am sending a mailing home to all of our church families. I have updated the choose your own adventure-themed Advent calendar that I created for last year. The idea is to light a candle together with your family on the Sundays in Advent and then pick from a list of suggested ideas throughout the week or create your own. *Or not!* The idea is to take your time this advent season and focus and embrace what is working. What is bringing your family joy and comfort? When you identify those things focus on them – and do more of that!



For those of you that are ready to lean into Advent a little more, I am also sending a weekly Advent devotional and coloring sheets (for kids and grownups!) created by Illustrated Ministry and some other goodies. There are links for downloading below. Also, let me know if I can mail anything out to you!

[2021 Advent Calendar](#) / [Illustrated Ministry Family Devotion](#) / [Coloring Sheets](#)

COOKIES!!!

The Fellowship Committee will be packaging to-go bags of cookies to take home on Christmas Eve! YOU CAN HELP! If you are so inclined, please bring 2-3 dozen homemade cookies to church by the close of Worship on Sunday, December 19 (you can place them on the large table in the big kitchen downstairs). We will be packaging that afternoon and freezing for the wait until Christmas Eve. Please stick with cookies that will still look good after they have been in a cellophane bag (in other words, no sticky or goo-ily iced cookies). THANK YOU!



Update from the Stewardship Committee

We want to thank everyone who has already submitted their 2022 pledge amount. We are currently at \$299,302 out of our \$347,609 Stewardship Campaign Goal.

The Stewardship Committee is currently making calls and sending e-mails to those we have not heard from.

If you have not already submitted your 2022 pledge amount, please get it in by Friday, December 10. The easiest way to let us know what you will be pledging is to e-mail Amy Whipple (office@sixthchurch.org) with your 2022 pledge amount.

Thank you for being “On this Road Together” to continue our mission to serve, heal, love and care.

With gratitude,

The Stewardship Committee (Carol Emerson, Patty Halverson, Beth Hazlett and Peter Kaplan)

December Birthdays

December 5	Alexandra DeJong	December 18.....	Mark Bertolet
December 8	Keith Gillogly	December 20.....	Louis DeLucia
December 11.....	Nils Hammer		Carolyn Freeman
	Peter Watt-Morse	December 24.....	Carol Emerson
December 12.....	Mary Ellen Watt-Morse	December 29.....	Jesse DeLucia
December 14.....	Jack Brennan		Ethan Greenley
	Jacob Watt-Morse		Allison Sennott
December 15.....	Lara Miller		Carlisle Turner
December 16.....	Ellen Gaul		Sterling Turner
	Joan Markert	December 30.....	Benjamin Bates

Sixth Church and God's Creation

STAY UPDATED – Sign up for the Earth Care Newsletter

The Earth Care Committee will be distributing a quarterly newsletter to share what we are doing as a committee, a church and as a community. Find out about local legislation, the 4 Rs and more in our December edition. To subscribe: <http://eepurl.com/gBTM9H>



What's Up With Hard-to-Recycle Item Collection at Sixth?

In the Murray Ave. lobby you may have noticed signs pointing to “recycling” in the basement of the church. Over the months of the pandemic, the Sixth Church Earth Care committee has re-grouped (with leadership thanks to Cosette Cornelius-Bates and Lynn Kawaratani) and made some changes to the communal recycling opportunities offered for members and friends. At the same time, we also want to make sure that recycling is not the only way we work as a faith community to reflect our care for creation.

This will be the first in a series of articles covering the “4 Rs”: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Respect. We’re covering recycling first since it occupies physical space in the building and because there have been some revelations in reports about the plastic we think we’ve recycled being sent to the landfill or burned as fuel. We are making an effort through direct inquiries and cost/benefit analysis to determine if various recycling streams are worthwhile.

Please recycle locally first instead of using mail-in programs. Eliminate as many middlemen as possible in the recycling pipeline. If no local program is available, evaluate the efficiency of a mail-in program so we are not likely using up more natural resources to do the shipping than it would take to produce new raw plastic material. We know that some hard-to-recycle plastic consumer waste is being pressed into new forms like HydroBlox, synthetic decking and planks, and decorative acoustic ceiling and wall tiles. We still encourage everyone to reduce purchases that include plastic, especially single-use plastic, and we’ll feature substitution suggestions in future articles in Sixth Sense and a new quarterly newsletter just for Earth Care stuff.

For now, here is an explanation of the hard-to-recycle items that you can drop off at Sixth to help keep them out of the landfill:

Pouches of pureed baby food/applesauce with cap: Any brand is acceptable. You do not have to rinse them out, but make sure as much food is squeezed out as possible, and put the cap back on.

Energy bar wrappers: Any brand of performance energy bar is acceptable. Please get rid of the crumbs and deliver wrappers flattened, not crumpled in a ball.

Snack bags & Wrappers: Any brand and size is acceptable for salty and sweet snack bags, candy and granola bar wrappers, gum wrappers and blister packs, zip top granola and snack bags. Bags can be plastic or coated paper. Please get rid of crumbs and deliver bags flattened, not crumpled. Help keep the room neat and group like items together in one bag or rubber band, especially if they are small. No wet or oily food packaging, such as tuna pouches.

Alkaline batteries: Any size of alkaline battery. Our reading suggests that leaking or damaged batteries can be recycled, but should be separated out in a plastic zip-lock bag.

e-Waste/Techno-trash: Phones (cell or landline), laptops, small computer components, modems, routers, video gaming consoles, remotes, wires & cables, power strips, cable boxes. WE NO LONGER TAKE CASSETTES, CDs or DVDs. We do not collect fee-for-disposal items, such as TVs, CRT monitors, microwaves, printers/scanners/copiers, AV equipment, bulbs or ink/toner cartridges, but you can get information about how to recycle these from Sue Koehler.

Brita water products: Brita takes back all its products and their plastic packaging. Must be Brita brand.

Not collecting at Sixth Church & Options:

Plastic bottle caps, etc: There are items we are not collecting in the recycling room, but are still in the figuring out stage of organizing volunteers to bring them to Michael Bros. This includes plastic bottle caps (any number or no number), metal lids, and plastic clamshell/tub/cups (not bottle/jar/jugs). If you have been saving these up because your municipality does not collect them, fill out the form at this link: <https://forms.gle/Zr4yyTX5VYttyZbA8> or email sixthec@gmail.com.

Coffee bags: Becca Stallings of the Church of the Redeemer is collecting these and sends them to Terracycle. She reports that people can drop off bags on her porch at 2340 Eldridge Street, and that she will notice them and bring them in.

For hard-to-recycle items we are not collecting right now, try these programs: for various batteries, light bulbs/tubes & small appliances (batteriesplus.com/t/recycling or eloopllc.com/residential-recycling); CFLs (Home Depot and Lowes); refrigerated cartons/shelf-stable cartons, such as milk cartons and aseptic cartons (recyclecartons.com); styrofoam blocks that come with appliances (tall bin in the courtyard of Appliance Warehouse in the South Side); plastic, glass and scrap metal that is not recycled at your curbside (michaelbrothershauling.com, especially the location near South Park); hazardous/electronic/universal waste collection events (PRC.org). Note: ECS&R locations are at least temporarily closed and suspended.

With curbside recycling, you can go the extra mile to give your glass, mixed paper and metal lids a better chance by doing the following...bring glass to any Michael Bros., Railroad St. or Bausman St. DPW, or Construction Junction...take mixed paper to any DPW drop-off or Construction Junction...bring metal lids and scrap to any Michael Bros. or the East End (Hamilton Ave.) DPW. The City of Pittsburgh has said that glass, mixed paper, and detached metal lids do not do well in the recycling process.

For plastics (utensils, plastic cups) and paper take out containers that are labelled "recyclable" (that is, corn-based, not regular old fashioned plastic things), the Monday East Liberty Farmers market has a vendor that does worm composting. It's called the "Worm Return" and they take compostable containers. <https://www.wormreturn.com/>

Have you found The Refillery on Murray Avenue yet? They sell bulk things - you bring your own container, so there's no plastic packaging at all - very cool! <https://www.therefillerypgh.com/>

In general, please follow the instructions on the poster in the recycling room (go through the door at the bottom of the Murray Ave. basement steps), and refrain from dropping off items that are not on the list. Notably, we are no longer taking personal care items and pens/markers. If you have any questions or have an idea for communal recycling, please contact Cosette Cornelius-Bates or Lynn Kawatani.

**Session had a well-deserved month off in November.
Check back in January for new notes!**



2021 Poinsettia Memorials

We offer two options for honoring our loved ones at Christmastime:

1. You can buy a poinsettia for \$7 and have a name placed in the Memorial Booklet in honor or memory of a loved one. You can then take your flower home after the Christmas Eve service.
2. The second option will be to have a loved one's name placed in the Memorial Booklet as before but instead of buying a flower, you will be donating \$7 or more to the Deacons Fund.

We realize that there may be fewer flowers to decorate our sanctuary for Christmas, but we feel that some of the money can be used for another cause and you will still have the opportunity to honor your loved ones.

There will be an order form in the bulletins for December 5 and 12. You can also use the online order form: <https://give.egive-usa.com/App/Form/0eee5af3-cea3-4bae-bfed-b6d40c822c55>

The deadline for ordering poinsettias is Sunday, December 12

Please pick up your poinsettia(s) December 24 or 26



**Christmas Eve
Worship Service:
Friday, December 24
at 7 pm**

Sixth Presbyterian Church
1688 Murray Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15217
412-421-2752
office@sixthchurch.org
www.sixthchurch.org

Dated Material – Do Not Hold
Address Service Requested



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 January newsletter is Dec. 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...

“During Advent, we occupy our greatest longings.” – Ruth Haley Barton

“Advent creates people, new people.” – Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“The Lord is coming, always coming...Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord.” – Henri Nouwen

“The waiting of Advent teaches us to live in increments, in small pieces rather than large chunks. Waiting also teaches us to measure our progress slowly.” – Holly Whitcomb.

“The season of Advent means there is something on the horizon the likes of which we have never seen before. So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder. Wait. Behold. Wonder. There will be time enough for running.” – Jan Richardson