

Sixth Sense



March 2025

Greetings Saints!

This month includes many transitions, including the beginning of Lent with Ash Wednesday on March 5th, and the PNC's pastor candidate leading worship on March 9th. Below is the upcoming schedule for this month, as well as a timeline the Session has voted upon should the way be clear.

March Worship and Activities:

- March 2-- Transfiguration Sunday with Celebration of Communion
- March 5-- Ash Wednesday, Dinner from 5-7pm, Worship at 7pm
- March 9-- Candidating Sunday with Congregational Meeting to follow
- March 16-- 2nd Sunday in Lent
- March 23-- Third Sunday in Lent, special CeasefirePA program after worship
- March 30-- Fourth Sunday in Lent

One of the greatest privileges of serving as the Interim Pastor is participating in confirmation class. On May 11th-- the current class is scheduled to join the church. Given this process, and the needs of the pastoral candidate-- it was agreed upon by the Session that my last day and last Sunday will be May 18th. I will of course write more at a later date, full of gratitude for having served this community-- but until then, please mark your calendars so that we might say goodbye in person!

In peace and solidarity,
Rev. Sarah Robbins, Interim Pastor

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

Starting Ash Wednesday, please stop by our table in the chapel for devotional materials to journey through the Lenten season at home: Using SanctifiedArt as a resource, our theme for Lent and Easter is entitled, "Everything (in)Between-- Meeting God in the Midst of Extremes". Our theme invites us to navigate the polarities in our lives with more faith, intention, and openness to be transformed. This season, we invite you to look beyond black and white binaries and easy answers. We encourage you to notice the dichotomies that define our lives, but also imagine where God might be meeting us beyond the categories we create. This Lent, we're trusting that God shows up in shades of gray, rainbow hues, and everywhere in between.

E-version Available Now!

Find a special e-reader version of this year's Lenten devotional, which you can access on your computer and mobile devices here: online.flippingbook.com/view/676218946/.

Daily Lenten Devotional

If you would like a daily Lenten devotional email, please send your email address to Jenny Newman at Jennyrunew@gmail.com by March 5th (Ash Wednesday).

UPCOMING DATES

INTRODUCTORY BROCHURE

The week of March 3rd-- look for a mailing from the PNC sharing with you an introductory brochure about their pastoral candidate.

ASH WEDNESDAY

March 5th is Ash Wednesday! At 12pm, Jenny and Pastor Sarah will be outside offering Ashes to Go to the neighborhood. From 5-7pm the Fellowship Committee is hosting a pancake dinner for the congregation, and at 7pm we will have a short worship service with the imposition of ashes. Looking forward to seeing you on the 5th!



MEET AND GREET

The PNC is inviting the entire congregation to a Meet & Greet on Saturday, March 8th from 1-3pm in the chapel. This will be time for you to meet the pastoral candidate and their family.

CANDIDATE TO PREACH, CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

On March 9th, the pastoral candidate will lead worship and preach, followed by a congregational meeting to vote on them becoming the next installed pastor at Sixth.

CELTIC PSALMS CONCERT

On Tuesday March 18th at 7pm, Celtic Psalms will be performing a free concert here at Sixth. Suggested donations \$10, Proceeds to Celtic Pilgrims 501(c)3. www.celticpsalms.com. Full flyer can be found on page 10.

GUN SAFETY PRESENTATION

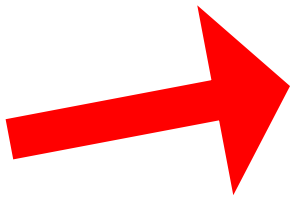
The Gun Safety Committee will be hosting Dr. Jay Breneman, an expert on suicide prevention who is working with CeasefirePA. He has engaged in a 3-year study on the link between suicide and firearms. Topics he will be covering include the data about firearm suicide, and dispelling myths about suicide. He will also talk about the most effective ways to prevent suicide based on research, and when, why, and how we do and do not talk about it.

Dr. Breneman will be presenting in the Chapel on Sunday, March 23 after worship. Because a light lunch will be provided we ask you to sign up on the sheet in the Chapel or online at <https://forms.office.com/r/xR3t85K8sA>. Please RSVP by March 16. Questions for Dr. Breneman are welcomed before, during, and after his presentation.



Because suicide is a highly sensitive topic, and we want to make people feel as comfortable as possible, this presentation will be limited to the Sixth Presbyterian congregation. The parlor will be available as a safe place to step away. A support person will be there.

Confirmation Class!



Confirmation class will meet
Sunday, March 2
following worship from **12:30 to 2 p.m.**
There will be lunch!

Children/Youth Choir

Children and Youth are invited to sing during worship on *Easter Sunday* (April 20).

Our rehearsal times will be:

March 16 after church

March 30 after church

April 13 (Palm Sunday) 9:30 before Sunday School

Contact Jenny or Shay if you would like the music
to practice at home.



Vacation Church School

June 23–27

@East Liberty Presbyterian Church

Vacation Church School with our friends ELPC will be held 9am to 3pm for children in pre-K (age 4 and potty-trained) through grade 5 (completed). Our theme this summer is LIVE it OUT: Discover How to Love like Jesus! Live It Out VCS combines the spirit of camp - the camaraderie, the daily activities, the immersive nature - with Bible stories, worship songs, service projects, and small group activities that teach kids how to live out their faith.

[Register a Student Here](#)

Teens 6th-12th grade and adult volunteers are needed as storytellers, camp counselors, to help with games, art, lunch and to model that learning to love like Jesus is an amazing lifelong adventure!

[Register as a Youth Volunteer](#)



March Youth Group

This month at weekly youth group we will celebrate Lent with service projects each week. Please note the times and locations and text Jenny with any questions (412-720-6392).

Lenten Service Blitz for 7th-12th graders Thursdays 4:30-7pm

We are still eating dinner! Might be early or offsite ... but food will be eaten!



March 6th Chapel Market

Help us digitalize Chapel Market's records and support the free store that so many of our neighbors utilize. @ELPC



March 13th Ronald McDonald House

Make and serve dinner to families who are staying at the RMH while a child receives medical care at Children's Hospital. Van leaves ELPC @4:45pm



March 20th Random Acts of Kindness

We will make and share some treats to let folks know they are loved and appreciated. @ELPC



March 27th Beverly's Birthdays

Baking cupcakes at **Sixth Presbyterian Church** for a birthday party through Beverly's Birthdays - a nonprofit whose mission is to celebrate children. Van leaves ELPC @4:45pm



April 3rd Reimagined Recycling

At Reimagining Recycling we will learn about their creative efforts to recycle #5 plastics here in Pittsburgh. We'll also have an opportunity to help keep plastic out of landfills. Van leaves ELPC @5:15pm



April 10th Garfield Community Farm

We will volunteer at Garfield Community Farm - so dress for the weather and digging in the dirt! Van leaves ELPC @5:15pm

Please RSVP!

Questions about timing and transportation ... reach out to Jenny at Jennyrunew@gmail.com

March Birthdays



March 4	Pam Howe Katie Kaplan	March 17	Rohan Vaux		
March 9	Linda Davoli	March 21	Winter Cornelius-Bates		
March 13	Joesph DeLucia	March 26	Malakai Whipple	March 29	Jack Ladebue



March Earth Care Corner

By Nora Johnson

Sixth Church's Earth Care Team is part of Presbyterians for Earth Care (PEC).

PEC is a national eco-justice network that cares for God's creation by connecting, equipping, and inspiring Presbyterians to make creation care a central concern of the church. Our Team here at Sixth Church is chaired by Pam Howe. We have regular meetings, and all are welcome to join us. Our next meeting will take place on Sunday, April 6, after the worship service in the Parlor, and we'll discuss our annual Earth Day program. We'd love to see you there.

Every two months, Sixth Church's Earth Care Team oversees the collection of congregants' plastic waste. We collect the kinds of plastic that our municipal solid waste programs do not accept. Our volunteers drive it to Michael Brothers Hauling on Horning Road in Baldwin Borough for recycling.

The following note brings you news about another aspect of our environmental concerns: air pollution in our region and the agency responsible for its reduction.

Allegheny County Health Department: intersection of air quality and our health

This last summer a new face appeared at the Allegheny County Health Department ([ACHD](#)). [Julia Vann](#), originally from Romania via North Carolina, stepped into her position as Director. And in November, eight new board members were appointed by County Executive Sara Innamorato. The [new board](#) is made up of people with substantial credentials in public health, medical practice, law, community involvement, and education.

What this means for us, residents of a region with a long history of air pollution, is that we might see an improvement in air quality in the coming years. [Here](#) is an article from Public Source ([Allie Miller](#), February 11, 2025) going deeper into what some people around us are experiencing.

A reported dip in asthma attacks and the Pittsburgh area's improved air quality ranking among cities nationally haven't resolved concerns about industry's harm to people's and community health. But new Allegheny County Health Department leadership spurs optimism among advocates.

Church & Community Committee Responds to Recent Challenges

By Tom Twiss

In response to recent developments, the February 16 meeting of the Church and Community Committee (C&C) revised its allocation process for 2025 and decided to divide its “Rainy Day Fund” between two organizations.

In recent years, the C&C has developed a thoughtful process for allocating Sixth’s locally directed mission funds to organizations that provide direct assistance to people in need and those that advocate for systemic change. The process involves reviewing, rating, and voting on whether to fund organizations using criteria that reflect Sixth’s values and priorities. This year, as last, Session has entrusted \$31,000 to C&C to distribute as locally directed mission funds.

One significant change this year was a shift in the relative emphases C&C will place on direct assistance and advocacy. Since 2016, C&C has devoted 40% of its budget to direct assistance and 60% to support advocacy for change. This year, dramatic cuts being made to the federal budget threaten to place peoples’ lives at risk. Consequently, for 2025 C&C will allocate half its budget to direct assistance and half to advocacy.

Other process changes involve the scoring of organizations. One of C&C’s scoring criteria is the size of the budget of each organization – with more points going to smaller groups. At its Feb. 16 meeting, C&C agreed to adjust budget size scores, taking into consideration expected losses in federal funding due to cuts imposed by the new administration. Another proposed change was prompted by the new administration’s encroachment on LGBTQIA+ rights. The proposal was to award points for the number of LGBTQIA+ members on an organization’s board. This was approved by the C&C. However, as the result of concerns raised after the meeting regarding privacy and practical issues involved in identifying and counting LGBTQIA+ board members, the committee is reconsidering this change.

One portion of the advocacy allocations made by C&C has been devoted to providing funds to each of the four committees at Sixth that are involved in important work for change: Earth Care, Gun Safety, the Justice Team, and More Light. Each has been asked to use its portion to support a group or groups involved in advocacy related to its own mission. This year, C&C agreed to invite each committee to consider using some of its funds for speaker honoraria or other expenses for programs at Sixth on pressing issues of concern to the committee.

A final decision of the C&C related to recent developments was the allocation of the C&C’s “Rainy Day Fund.” That is the portion of the C&C’s budget set aside to address urgent humanitarian situations. The February C&C meeting noted that two such situations are already evident. One is the crisis in Gaza, where the population is continuing to experience acute malnutrition, the widespread disease, and severe shortages of medical care and housing. Another is the loss of federal funding for international aid and emergency relief services.

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To address these situations, C&C decided to divide its 2025 Rainy Day Fund of \$3,020 equally between two groups. One is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which continues to be the leading international organization providing aid to Gaza, despite efforts by Israel to ban its operations. This contribution – through the 501(c)3 organization [UNRWA USA](#) – will supplement the funds collected at Sixth's January 25 Gaza Dinner. [See the report on the Gaza fundraiser by Leila Richards in this issue of *Sixth Sense*, which includes information about how you can still contribute.] The other is [Church World Service](#) (CWS), an organization providing critical emergency relief and support for refugees and those who are hungry throughout the world. CWS has already had to lay off half its US staff due to funding cut-backs. This allocation will supplement C&C's regular annual contribution to CWS and funds collected by the annual Pittsburgh Crop Walk.

C&C welcomes new members and suggestions about organizations to support. Proposals for organizations will be accepted through Easter Sunday, April 20. For more information, please contact Tom Twiss (ttwiss@pitt.edu) or Peter Kaplan (pghpeter9@gmail.com).

Mission to the Hungry

Dear Friends,

The Deacons have been working hard to further our congregation's mission to the hungry and homeless since the Hot Metal Table closed in November.

At the moment, we are exploring avenues toward that effort and have learned that the church, Mary, Queen of Peace, on the South Side provides 1 meal a month (via Living Stones) and is in need of volunteers. We are exploring the possibility of being involved in that mission. You are welcome to reach out to them if you would like to participate in it. If you need additional information, you can contact me at 412-243-0656.

We continue to discern additional ways we can help the least of these and welcome any suggestions from you.

[Living Stones](#) is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving meals in the South Hills and, most recently, the South Side Flats. Their addition to **first Sundays of the month** at [Mary, Queen of Peace](#) (81 South 13th Street; phone: 412-481-8380) represents the *only* free meal option currently being offered on the South Side Flats. They are very much in need of volunteers to serve meals at this location. Note that there is no cooking needed or involved - this is serving only.

<https://growlivingstones.com/programs/sunday-dinners/>

Thank you for your generosity of spirit,
Linda Davoli

Session Meeting Highlights

Sixth Presbyterian Church- February 19, 2025

CLERK'S REPORT:

- Worship: In Person/YouTube-1/19 (58/57); 1/26 (78/60); 2/2 (96/50); 2/9 (55/52); 2/16 (70/44)
- Sixth Church Roll Review-Pastor Sarah, Clerk Kathi, Elders Barb Parees and Peter Kaplan. Jenny Newman will be invited to review the current list of members as well.
- Pittsburgh Presbytery 2025 Meeting Schedule
 - ◊ Thursday, May 22 – Eastminster Presbyterian Church at 1:00 PM
 - ◊ Thursday, October 2 – Crestfield Camp and Conference Center at 10:00 AM
 - ◊ Thursday, December 11 – Cross Roads Presbyterian Church, Monroeville at 1:00 PM

MEETING WITH PNC:

The members of the PNC joined the meeting to share information about their chosen candidate for pastor. As announced during worship, the candidate will lead worship on March 9th, followed by a congregational meeting to vote by written ballot and approve the Terms of Call. A further timeline has been determined, and information will be forthcoming for the congregation.

PASTORAL REPORT:

- March 18 hosting the Celtic Psalms concert in sanctuary at 7pm.
- Mary Lib Myers Memorial Service Saturday, March 29th at 11:30am.
- Rev. Robbins on continuing education pilgrimage to Scotland from April 24-May 5. Pulpit supply will be set-up for those two weeks.
- Confirmation class joining on May 11.

LENT/EASTER CALENDAR:

- ◊ March 5- Ash Wednesday- Pancake Dinner at 5pm., worship at 7pm.
- ◊ March 16- Curriculum series will begin.
- ◊ April 13- Palm Sunday
- ◊ April 17- Maundy Thursday/Good Friday service at 7pm. in the chapel- Agape meal.
- ◊ April 20- Easter Sunday with fellowship after.

FINANCE:

- ◊ January numbers were good.
- ◊ Winter expenses are high. Gas bill and snow removal costs have been high.
- ◊ The budget will be adjusted for the new Pastoral Terms of Call, which are within the allotted pastoral budget.

HOUSE:

- ◊ Jane Fox is donating a Steinway piano to the church. Shay Carter and Kirk Howe are making arrangements for it to be moved. Thank you, Jane!

OTHER NEWS:

- The Gun Safety Committee will be hosting Dr. Jay Breneman on Sunday, March 23rd, after worship. He will be speaking about the link between suicide and firearms.
- The Earth Care Committee will be hosting an after-church activity on April 27th in honor of Earth Day. It will include an opportunity to create "Bug Hotels" and to learn about how to care for pollinators in our environment. We will also serve snacks made from foods that rely on pollinators to grow.

COFFEE HOUR ASSIGNMENTS: March 2-Gun Safety, April 6-Church and Community.

NEXT MEETING: March 19, 2025, 7pm.

Sixth's Gaza Relief Fundraiser a Big Success

Leila Richards

At the conclusion of our four-part series on “Why Palestine Matters,” several members of Sixth expressed an interest in a follow up event, including Chris Berg, who, with the support of the Session, organized a fundraising dinner for UNRWA (The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees). UNRWA was established to care for some 750,000 refugees who fled from their homes in Palestine in 1948 during the war following the establishment of Israel. Unlike other UN agencies, UNRWA was intended to be only a temporary agency that would provide shelter, food, and primary health care and education to Palestinian refugees until Palestinians could return to their homes. But since the refugees have been unable to return, UNRWA remains a “temporary” agency that must raise its own funds every year.

Despite a cutoff of funds dating from the first Trump administration and the recent outlawing of UNRWA by Israel, UNRWA continues to operate with financial support from Europe and Arab countries and private donations and remains the primary supplier of humanitarian aid for Gaza, the West Bank, and Palestinians in surrounding Arab countries.

After weeks of meticulous planning by our kitchen task force, our fundraiser was held on Saturday January 25 for members of Sixth and invited guests. We were very fortunate to have as our speaker Hani Almadhoun, director of Development for UNRWA USA in Washington DC. Hani lived in Gaza for several years with his family. Two of his brothers were killed during the yearlong siege and a third operates a community soup kitchen in Gaza.

After Hani's talk in the sanctuary, more than 100 guests sat down to a Palestinian dinner prepared by our kitchen crew and by Alaa Aqra, owner of a Pittsburgh restaurant. Members of the Palestinian community in Pittsburgh also arranged for Hani to speak at Islamic centers in Oakland and Warrendale during his visit.

So far, our fundraising event has netted a little more than \$7,000 – greatly exceeding our expectations. To that, Sixth's Church and Community Committee has added another \$1,500. **And we've just received a challenge grant from one of our guests for \$500 with a goal of reaching a final total of \$10,000. If you would like to contribute in response to this challenge, please make out your check to Sixth Presbyterian Church, putting “Gaza relief” in the notes field, and send it to Sixth Presbyterian Church, 1688 Murray Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15217.**

Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who made this event such a big success!

*Thank
You*



The deadline for the April newsletter is:
Monday, March 24th.

Please email articles and announcements to the church office at officesixthchurch@gmail.com.

You can also put printed copies on the office desk.

Thanks you!



Celtic Psalms

St. Patrick's Week Concert

Tuesday, March 18th 7pm

Sixth Presbyterian Church

1688 Murray Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Free concert, suggested donation \$10
 Proceeds to Celtic Pilgrims 501(c)3



CELTIC PILGRIMS



www.celticpsalms.com
www.celticpilgrims.com
 @CelticPsalms



Presbyterians for
Earth Care

AN ECO-JUSTICE NETWORK



MORE LIGHT
 PRESBYTERIANS

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.

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