

Sixth Sense



July/August 2025

Friends,

As I reflect on these early days of ministry together, I'm reminded of Paul's words to the Philippians about partnership in the gospel (Philippians 1:3-6). Just as Paul expressed joy in his connection with that early church community, I feel blessed by each conversation and encounter that helps weave the fabric of our shared ministry. These relationships aren't just social connections - they're sacred spaces where God's Spirit moves among us, building up the body of Christ one conversation at a time. In getting to know each other, we discover the unique gifts God has given this congregation and discern together how we might use them to serve God's purposes in our neighborhood and beyond.

These first weeks at Sixth have been filled with wonderful conversations and connections as I've begun meeting with members of our church family. I'm continuing to reach out to schedule more one-on-one meetings, but please don't feel you need to wait for an invitation - I'd love to connect with you! Whether you'd like to grab coffee, meet at the church, or simply chat by phone, I'm here and eager to get to know you better.

The summer months ahead offer a perfect opportunity for us to learn more about each other and our neighborhood community in a relaxed way. I'm looking forward to using this time to better understand what makes Sixth special as we prepare to launch into fall together with renewed energy and vision.



Mark your calendars for Saturday, September 14th at 4:00 PM for my installation service. We intentionally schedule these celebrations in the afternoon to allow our fellow Presbyterian clergy, who are typically leading their own Sunday morning services, to join in this meaningful occasion. It will be a joyful time of worship and fellowship as we formally begin our ministry together.

Feel free to reach out anytime by phone, email or stopping by the church office. I'm typically in my second floor study Tuesdays through Thursdays, as well as Sundays, and available remotely on Mondays. If you need a more accessible place to meet, please let me know ahead of time and we'll plan on connecting in the parlor or somewhere like a local coffee shop. I look forward to continuing to get to know each of you in the weeks and months ahead.

With gratitude and excitement for our shared journey,
Pastor Charissa

Here's what I am reading this summer! Read along with me and meet after church for coffee, snacks, and to discuss!

SUMMER READERS

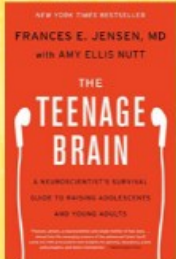
READ WITH JENNY

July 20

The Teenage Brain: A Neuroscientist's Survival Guide to Raising Adolescents and Young Adults

by Frances E. Jensen

This is a non-fiction research-based book that is highly readable.



August 24

A Children's Bible

by Lydia Millet

Don't let the title fool you! This is a literary fiction novel by a Pulitzer Prize finalist.



I have an extra copy of each for borrowing. These books are also available at your favorite local bookseller and through the Carnegie Library (e-books and audio books as well!)

URGENT APPEAL- Help Needed

Calling all former and interested friends to be interviewers for people seeking Lazarus Fund help. The need for those funds is increasing.

The process has been much improved and is easier. Also, April will be glad to train any interested folks.

Please lend your help by contacting April Clisura at: april.clisura@gmail.com or calling the church office.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!





July/August Earth Care Corner

By Kitty Brunkhorst and April Clisura



Have you looked at the garden near the Murray Ave. steps this spring? Pollinator-friendly plants abound! Leslie Kaplan selected a variety of colorful blooming plants that will have 3-season interest and grow well in lots of sun. Benefits to growing these plants native to the northeast are that they are perennial (will grow back year after year without replanting) and have low water usage, meaning they can get established with moderate soil moisture and then will settle in as low-water, drought tolerant mature plants.

Here are details of a few of the plants, which have all been marked with labels.

Oxeye/False Sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides* "Tuscan Sun")

Most compact variety of *Heliopsis*; Member of the Aster family, which blooms through fall; medium soil moisture; 24-36"

Garden Phlox (*Phlox paniculata* "Jeana")

New variety of phlox, which resists mildew and is extremely cold hardy; blooms through late summer; medium soil moisture 36-48"

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Wild Bergamot/Beebalm (*Monarda fistulosa*)

Bonus for you, the leaves are edible and have been used as a type of tea; blooms in early summer and then forms attractive dry seed heads; prone to powdery mildew; medium soil moisture; 36-48" with a spreading habit (in the mint family)

Eastern Beebalm (*Monarda bradburiana*)

Shorter than its cousin *Monarda fistulosa* and stays more compact, but shares a sharp minty-oregano taste to the leaves; medium soil moisture; 18"-24"

Eastern Red Columbine, Wild Red Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)

An early spring bloomer, this relative of the buttercup is known for its intricate shaped and bright flowers; self-seeds; low to high soil moisture; 24-36" (this plant can also grow in part-shade to shade)

False Indigo (*Baptisia* hybrids "Vanilla Cream" and "Blueberry Sunday")

Forms a compact mound with tall spires of flowers; blooms late spring to early summer, leaving decorative seed pods; medium soil moisture; 30-36"

But you may not have a lot of room. You may live in a townhouse or apartment with only a balcony or steps. Don't despair! A flower pot will hold several marigolds that attract bees and also emit an odor that deters mosquitoes. A flower pot or box is enough space for several salvia, which attract both butterflies and hummingbirds. Even if instructions say "full sun," that's usually not necessary; some sun is usually sufficient. You can attract pollinators AND enjoy the spectacle well into fall!



*Sixth Church Pollinator Garden-
New pollinator-friendly plants as seen
the last week of June.*



*Kitty Brunkhorst's mini pollinator and
people-friendly (mosquito-repelling)
garden box.*

News from the Stewardship Committee– June 2025

Hello Friends,

The role of the Stewardship Committee is to raise the funds we need to worship God with word and music, maintain our beautiful sanctuary, and pursue God's vision of an inclusive, just, peaceful, and livable world. Each Fall, we prayerfully ask that you pledge what you can so that Sixth Church can do all of this in God's name. During the Spring and Summer, we plan for the stewardship campaign.

The Campaign Theme

As a first step, we've decided on a theme for this year's campaign:

“Caring for Each Other in a Changing World”

As we begin a new chapter in our faith journey together, we commit to:

- Nurture an inclusive faith community where all generations pray, learn, grow together, and care for one another's spiritual and practical needs;
- Embody Christ's peace through active compassion in our neighborhood and world;
- Build relationships across differences to address poverty and injustice in our community and beyond;
- Maintain and create safe spaces where LGBTQIA+ individuals and families find authentic belonging and church leadership opportunities;
- Practice intentional hospitality that transforms both welcomed and welcomer;
- Foster a culture of shared stewardship where every generation contributes their unique gifts and perspectives; and
- Love one another.

We are grateful that Rev. Dr. Charissa Howe, our new Pastor, has enthusiastically engaged with us to define and enrich this year's theme.

Other Tasks for the Summer

- We will meet on June 23rd to decide whom we will recruit to offer written testimonials for the stewardship brochure and spoken “Moments for Stewardship” presented during selected October and November worship services.
- We will meet on July 2nd with Reverend Charissa to finalize the stewardship campaign timeline.
- Later in the Summer, we will meet with Reverend Charissa, the Church Treasurer, the Finance Chair, Personnel Chair, and House Chair to discuss the Stewardship Campaign goal.

Looking to the Future: Planned Giving

At the Stewardship Committee's May meeting, Elder Peter Watt-Morse gave a presentation on plans to initiate a planned giving program for Sixth Church. On Sunday, September 21, the Reverend Ellie Johns-Kelly, the Ministry Relations Officer for the Allegheny and Chesapeake Region of the denomination, will preach a sermon focused on planned giving.

Planned giving is distinct from the annual stewardship campaign. Its goal is to encourage church members to make donations to the church that can provide resources for the congregation's long-term future. Reverend Johns-Kelly will also give a talk on this topic after the service. During August and early to mid-September, there will be a series of bulletin inserts which address commonly held but inaccurate assumptions about planned giving.

The Stewardship Committee: Patty Halverson; Beth Hazlett; Peter Kaplan (Chair); and Barb Parees.

PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM

As we have discussed, unlike many other Presbyterian Churches in the City of Pittsburgh, Sixth Church relies heavily on annual pledge giving rather than its endowment for operating expenses. In order to increase that source of support for the mission of Sixth for years to come, over the coming months, we'll be increasing our efforts with regard to planned giving.

Before we begin, we want to broaden our vision of what "Planned Giving" really is. Most of us see it as a gift to the church that we give in the future, after we no longer need those assets, usually after we pass away. It's much better: It's not what's expected with annual stewardship campaigns. For most of us, the reality is that it will be the most transformative gift to the mission of Sixth Church that most of us can ever make.

Below are some Planned Giving Factoids that have been developed by the Presbyterian Foundation that we think are helpful.

Planned Giving Factoid One:
ASSUMPTION: Planned giving is only for wealthy people.
ANSWER: False

Planned giving is not just for the wealthy. It is an opportunity for the vast majority of us, regardless of socio-economic background, to make a special gift to Sixth.

Throughout our lifetime, for many of us, only a small portion of our cash, investments and other assets are available to use, to make charitable gifts. In general, around 90% of our resources are being used for us to drive, to sleep and enjoy, or save for retirement.

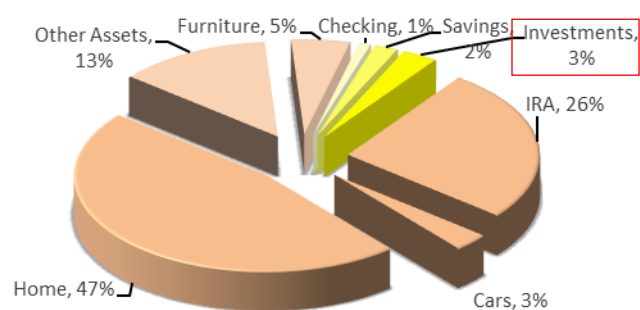
Yet one day, after our lifetime, all of this is going somewhere or to someone. Planned giving is how we point this approximately 90% of resources (the tan slices) to support and care for the people and places that we cherish so dearly that it matters greatly what happens to them after our lifetime.

Everyone can do this, not just the wealthy. This is the greatest gift most of us will ever make – our opportunity to have a huge impact. Regardless of how much we have.

Planned Giving Factoid Two:
ASSUMPTION: Planned gifts are large.
ANSWER: False

Well, they are not *always* large. They *can* be any size. However, on average, when compared with a giver's regular giving, their planned gift is the largest gift they make in their lifetime. That is primarily because it's from our lifetime of accumulated resources – after we are finished using them.

On average it's giver's largest gift in size, which makes it that generous giver's greatest giving opportunity to have a transformational impact – to provide for future mission opportunities and meet future challenges of Sixth Presbyterian Church.



The average bequest is more than 2x the size of someone's lifetime annual giving.

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Planned Giving Factoid Three:

ASSUMPTION: How old are planned givers? The average planned giver wrote their first planned gift when in their:

ANSWER: 50's

Planned givers on average wrote their first gift into their plans when they were in their 50's. They are followed by people who wrote their first gift in their 60's, followed by people in their 40's.

53

Years

53 years old: the average age for those writing their first charitable planned gift into their future plans. *

* "Leaving a Legacy" by Giving USA in 2019. A survey of planned givers.

Church & Community's Distribution of Locally Directed Mission Funds in 2025

The Church & Community Committee (C&C) is the committee responsible for distributing the funds Sixth sets aside for locally directed mission. At its May 25th meeting, the committee completed most of its allocations for 2025.

At our February meeting we previously allocated \$800 to the Youth Group to be distributed to worthy causes. We also gave \$1,887.50 to each of the four committees at Sixth that are engaged in advocacy for social change (Earth Care, Gun Safety, Justice, and More Light). In turn, the four committees were asked to distribute these funds to advocacy organizations or use them for programs at Sixth. Finally, at our February meeting we decided to divide our \$3,020 "Rainy Day Fund" equally between the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and Church World Service (CWS).

At our May 25 meeting C&C received reports from the Youth Group and the advocacy committees on how they distributed their allocations:

Youth Group:

Foster Love Project Pittsburgh	\$200
Reading Ready Pittsburgh	\$200
Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation	\$200
Hello, Neighbor,	\$200
Total	\$800

Earth Care:

Penn Future	\$630
Three Rivers Waterkeeper	\$630
Garfield Community Farm	\$627.50
Total	\$1,887.50

Gun Safety:

CeaseFire PA	\$1,000.00
South Pittsburgh Peacemakers	\$737.50
Everytown for Gun Safety	\$150.00
Total	\$1,887.50

More Light:

Shepherd Wellness Community	\$562.00
SisTers PGH	\$562.00
Waverly Presbyterian Church/Donation to LAMP (LGBTQIA+ Affirming Ministries of Pittsburgh)	\$562.00
Kept in reserve to pay up to 2 speakers an honorarium	\$200.00
\$1.50 unallocated, to be returned to the general fund along with any unspent honoraria funds at the end of the fiscal year.	\$1.50
Total	\$1,887.50

The reconstituted Justice Committee is expected to meet later in the year and decide how to spend its \$1,887.50 allocation.

Following these reports, C&C voted to approve recommended allocations to twelve advocacy, direct assistance, and “hybrid” organizations (groups involved in both direct assistance and advocacy). Recommendations were determined by scores each organization received on five criteria:

- Participation in the organization by members of Sixth
- Financial need for funds Sixth could provide
- People of Color on the Board of Directors
- Faith-Based organizations
- Negative impact of Federal budget cuts

The allocation amounts approved by C&C were as follows:

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Allocation Amount</u>
Fishes & Loaves Cooperative Ministries	6	\$2,543.16
Lazarus Fund of Pittsburgh Presbytery	6	\$2,543.16
Church World Service	5	\$1,898.54
El Porvenir Cooperative (Nicaragua)	5	\$1,898.54
Casa San Jose	4	\$1,730.76
MHY Family Services	4	\$1,695.44
Wilksburg Community Ministries	4	\$1,695.44
Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Center	5	\$1,677.78
Pittsburghers for Public Transit	4	\$1,342.22
Pittsburgh United	3	\$1,006.67
Just Harvest	3	\$927.19
Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania	2	\$671.11
Total		\$19,630.00

The only remaining allocation for C&C to consider this year will be the distribution of 25% of the Peace & Global Witness Offering Sixth collected at the end of May and in early June. 25% of that Offering stays with local congregations; 25% goes to mid councils to unite congregations to support peacemaking in their regions; and 50% supports the work for peace and reconciliation being done by Presbyterians across the globe.

~Tom Twiss & Peter Kaplan

Session Meeting Highlights

Sixth Presbyterian Church– June 11, 2025

- Worship: In Person/YouTube-5/25 (81/51); 6/1 (68) Church Picnic, no streaming; 6/8 (58/27)
- Correspondence- Pastor Charissa received a request from John Creasy who is running the Wild Indigo Guild, (a collection of congregations who are working to restore creation through nature), for a letter of support for their newest project.
- Pittsburgh Presbytery 2025 Meeting Schedule:
 - ◊ Thursday, October 2 – Crestfield Camp and Conference Center at 10:00 AM
 - ◊ Thursday, December 11 – Cross Roads Presbyterian Church, Monroeville, at 1:00 PM

PASTORAL REPORT:

- The service of installation of Rev. Dr. Charissa Howe will be on Sunday, September 14, 2025. Those who will be attending/officiating are Rev. Joshua Fisher, Mosaic Community Church, Rev. Rebecca DePoe, Presbyterian Church of Coraopolis, Elder Katherine Shimko, Mosaic Community Church and Elder Andrew Swenson, Sixth Presbyterian Church and other officials.
- Jenny Newman and Pastor Charissa will host Breaking Bread in the Park (Frick, Blue Slide Park) for summer fellowship times.
- Request from Shay to host the Unity Brass Band at Sixth as a concert space on Sunday, August 3, during the afternoon was approved.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

- FINANCE and PERSONNEL had nothing new to report
- HOUSE- continues to manage building issues and will investigate snow removal for the winter
- STEWARDSHIP
 - ◊ Elder Peter Kaplan shared that the Stewardship Committee continues to work on the Fall Campaign.
 - ◊ Elder Watt-Morse shared inserts for the bulletins for August and September before Ellie Johns-Kelley from the Presbyterian Foundation preaches on September 21 and provides a lunch seminar on planned giving.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Representatives of More Light and Gun Safety committees will have a table at the June 28th Night Market with information about Sixth.
- Worship committee established the dates of communion for the remainder of the year.

COMMITTEE RESTRUCTURING: Goal will be to complete the restructuring framework by September when new officers are ordained/installed. In the meantime, groups, such as the Justice Team, can meet and make some decisions to move forward.

COFFEE HOUR ASSIGNMENTS: July 6-Fellowship, Aug. 3-Earth Care, Sept. 7-Christian Education

NEXT SESSION MEETING: Wednesday, August 27, 2025, 7pm.

Elder Twiss moved that the meeting adjourn at 8:40pm. Pastor Charissa closed with prayer.

Respectfully Submitted, Kathi Robinson-Dassel, Clerk of Session



The deadline for the combined September newsletter is:
Monday, August 25th.

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!



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.

Sixth Presbyterian Church
1688 Murray Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

 July Birthdays 			
July 2	Brenda Flores Tim Howe	July 15	Cyndi Dickson
July 6	Virginia McQuown	July 20	Pamela Bower
July 7	Malena Howe	July 29	Thoren Vaux
July 9	Kurt Thompson	July 31	Cheryl Kubelick
July 12	Joseph Ashenden		
July 14	Carole Anderson		

 August Birthdays 			
Aug. 1	Gregson Vaux	Aug. 15	Kathi Robinson-Dassell
Aug. 3	John Sennott	Aug. 17	Dee Hunter Levi Howe
Aug. 7	Verna Robinson	Aug. 19	Lesla Rosamond
Aug. 10	Nora Johnson	Aug. 23	Malcolm Juring
Aug. 12	Denise DeJong Beverly Livingston	Aug. 25	Dex Guyette
Aug.14	Paul Watt- Morse		



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