

# Sixth Sense



Dear Sixth Family,

The way we understand our faith, our neighbors, and our future is rarely through dry facts or committee minutes; it is through the stories we tell and the stories we hear.

This Lent, as we journey toward Easter under our theme "**Tell Me Something Good**," I want to invite you to participate in a special practice of community building: listening to the stories that make us who we are.

In a world that often feels like it is spinning – we need places of sanctuary. You may have heard about the Celtic concept of "Soul Friendship," which describes a relationship that acts as a container where we can face the truth of our lives without fear. Our current Lenten Zoom series, "**The Stories We Share**," is designed to be exactly that kind of sanctuary: a space where we move beyond the surface to acknowledge our shared humanity and our shared hope.

Each Tuesday night, we are gathering on Zoom to hear from a cross-section of our congregation – from members who have been here for decades to youth who are just beginning to shape the church of the future. We are exploring the "Story of Care" in how we steward our resources, the "Story of Belonging" in our **More Light** LGBTQIA+ inclusion, and the "Story of Solidarity" in our work with immigrant neighbors and partners like **Casa San José**. In listening to these distinct voices, we are discovering the "common thread" that binds us all together, regardless of our age or background.

When a community sees itself not just as individuals, but as people playing a role in a larger, shared narrative, we are better able to focus on the collective good. I encourage you to join us on Zoom this **Tuesday at 7:00 PM** (see page 2 for flyer and QR). Whether you can attend every remaining session or just drop in for one, your presence helps create the listening space we need to discern where God is leading us next.

Let us continue to listen, to share, and to write the next chapter of Sixth Presbyterian together.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Charissa

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Dr. Charissa Clark Howe".

## March 2026

### WORSHIP

March 8<sup>th</sup>: *3rd Sunday in Lent*  
(Daylight Savings: *SPRING FORWARD*)

March 15<sup>th</sup>: *4th Sunday in Lent*

March 22<sup>nd</sup>: *5th Sunday in Lent*

March 29<sup>th</sup>: **Palm Sunday**  
with waving of Palms and  
youth choir.

April 2<sup>nd</sup>: **Maundy Thursday**  
Maundy Thursday worship  
with combined Agape meal in  
the chapel at 7PM

April 3<sup>rd</sup>: **Good Friday**  
Visit our prayer stations  
in the sanctuary.  
Stop by anytime between  
9-11:50AM, 2-4PM, or 6-8PM  
for prayer and reflection.  
Good Friday worship service at  
Church of the Redeemer at  
noon.

April 5<sup>th</sup>: **Resurrection of the  
Lord/ Easter Day**  
Students and their families  
invited during Sunday School  
hour for Easter activities  
(chapel). Worship at 11AM,  
celebrated with Communion  
and special music.  
Annual Deviled Egg Taste-Off  
after service.

## Deviled Egg Taste-Off



The SIXTH CHURCH DEVEILED EGG TASTE-OFF during coffee hour on Easter Sunday is on!

We'd love for you to participate by bringing in a plate/container of deviled eggs on Easter Sunday. Take them to the downstairs kitchen from 9:30am till the start of worship, so that the catering committee can refrigerate, plate and set them out with the coffee and other refreshments after the service.

Thank you! The more eggs, the merrier!



## The Stories We Share

A Lenten Conversation Series

Tuesdays at 7 PM on Zoom.  
Drop in for any or all of these  
intergenerational conversations with our  
friends and members.

- 2/24/26 The Story of Us: Community
- 3/3/26 The Story of Care: Stewardship
- 3/10/26 The Story of Belonging: LGBTQIA+ Inclusion
- 3/17/26 The Story of our Neighborhood: Interfaith Connections
- 3/24/26 The Story of Solidarity: Supporting Immigrant Neighbors
- 3/31/26 The Story of Possibility: Hope for our Future

Please contact the church office for the Zoom link. Or scan the QR code now to add this to your calendar.



## LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

Please stop by our table in the sanctuary for devotional materials to journey through the Lenten season at home. Using SanctifiedArt as a resource, our theme for Lent and Easter is entitled, "Tell Me Something Good".

### **E-version Available!**

Our friends at A Sanctified Art have provided a special e-reader version of this year's Lenten devotional, which you can access on your computer and mobile devices: [online.flippingbook.com/view/546389771/](https://online.flippingbook.com/view/546389771/). In order to protect their work, please refrain from sharing this link or posting it on social media.

## COMMITTEE RESTRUCTURING UPDATE

In late 2025, the Session approved a new organizational structure for our church's ministries and volunteer groups to make our work together more efficient, manageable, and autonomous.

We were long overdue for a change, and our old committee structure was causing problems: staff could not make it to all the meetings where their presence was required, session members were overworked chairing committees that didn't need their oversight, and necessary congregation work was either not happening or was not well supported because it did not have a committee home. The new structure addresses all of these issues, facilitating the governance and mission of the church through more focused attention and support.

We want to reassure you that **we are not eliminating any of our current groups or ministries in this process**. Every existing group will continue its vital work for our church community; they will simply be reorganized to foster collaboration with each other and more autonomous operations. A few new groups have also been added to take care of new work.

The biggest change you will see is a shift in the language we use and our communication channels of Committees, Subcommittees, Action Teams, and Volunteer Pools:

**Committees** serve as the primary working groups that study, recommend, and carry out decisions. At least one Committee member must be on Session, but some Committees have more than one Session member.

**Subcommittees** operate under the oversight of a main committee to tackle specific areas of responsibility. This lets us divide complex work into manageable pieces while maintaining clear, streamlined lines of communication and accountability.

**Action Teams** such as the Earth Care, More Light, Gun Safety, and Justice and Peace teams do the hands-on work of mission and outward-facing ministry. These groups are now freed from the formal administrative requirements of traditional committees, allowing them to operate much more nimbly and autonomously so they can focus on direct community engagement and implementation. They maintain a strong communication channel to the broader church through the Mission Committee's Session liaison(s), who help with budgeting and any requests requiring Session approval.

**Volunteer Pools** don't meet at all. They are collections of people who volunteer their time for a specific task such as Counters or Liturgists. Each now has an official "home" under one of the main Committees through which it can get Session's attention and ask for support.

As outlined in the annual report, the new grouping looks like this:

- Executive Committee: Meets with moderator prior to Session meetings, and for specially called meetings, as deemed necessary.
  - ◇ House Committee
  - ◇ Finance Committee
  - ◇ Personnel Committee
  - ◇ Counters Volunteer Pool
  - ◇ Closers Volunteer Pool

- Seasonal Committees: Only meet part of the year
  - ◊ Stewardship Committee
  - ◊ Nominating Committee
- **Spiritual Formation Committee:** Oversees the worship and spiritual growth of the church and works closely with the Pastor, Christian Education Director, and Music Director.
  - ◊ Worship volunteers/subcommittee
  - ◊ Christian Education subcommittee
  - ◊ Liturgists Volunteer Pool
  - ◊ Chorister Volunteer Pool
- **NEW! - Engagement Committee:** Oversees event planning, church growth, and communications.
  - ◊ Fellowship Team
  - ◊ Ushers Volunteer Pool
  - ◊ Coffee Hour Volunteer Pool
  - ◊ Livestream Volunteer Pool
- **Mission/Outreach Committee**
  - ◊ Church & Community Subcommittee
  - ◊ Peace & Justice action group
  - ◊ More Light action group
  - ◊ Gun Safety action group
  - ◊ Earth Care action group

Feel free to ask questions and share feedback about this new structure with your (new!) Engagement Committee co-chairs: Kate Davoli and Beth Hazlett.

## Engagement Committee Needs You!

Are you looking to get to know your fellow church members & friends better?

Do you have thoughts as to how we can do better greeting new attendees and transitioning those attendees to members?

Do you have ideas as to how we can better market Sixth Presbyterian Church to the Pittsburgh Community?

Then the Engagement Committee is for YOU!

**Please join us on Sunday, March 22 in the Parlor after worship to brainstorm how to have more members & friends events, and how to attract new members and friends.**

## March Youth (7th-12th)

**Weekly Youth Group**  
**Thursdays - 4:30 to p.m.**  
Dinner is served at 5.  
Join us as we gather with our friends from East Liberty Presbyterian Church to share a meal, fellowship and Bible Study.



*Also! The Presbytery-wide spring youth retreat at Camp Crestfield will be held March 20-22.*

**March 5 @ELPC**  
**March 12 @ELPC**  
**March 19 @ELPC**  
**March 26 @Sixth Church**

*Please contact Jenny if you are interested in attending.*

**Contact: Jenny Newman**  
[Jennyrunew@gmail.com](mailto:Jennyrunew@gmail.com)  
412-720-6392



## Youth Choir

Mark your calendars! All kids and youth are invited to sing together on Palm Sunday (March 29).

Rehearsals will be held after worship on the following dates:

**March 13**  
**March 22**

## Vacation Church School June 22-26 @ELPC

We are collaborating again with East Liberty Presbyterian Church in June for Vacation Church School. Last year VCS registration filled up quickly! Sign up for the week, or just a day, or whatever works for your schedule.

**VCS is held from 9 am-3 pm, for children aged 4 through grade 5.** Our theme this summer is #KidsConnect, where children wake up those neurons, get those synapses flowing, and jump on the wavelength of God's love! We will use our brain power as we connect with Jesus, family, and friends of all ages! As children learn and create together, they will find a place of belonging, make new friends, and follow Jesus' example of making room for all and loving one another. Each day includes worship and drama, Bible study, art and science explorations, brain-building challenges, and active games. Teen and adult volunteers are needed as storytellers and camp counselors, to help with games and art, to help with lunch, and to model for kids that learning to love like Jesus is an amazing lifelong adventure!

[Camper Registration](#)

[Teen Volunteer Registration](#)

[Adult Volunteer Registration](#)



# The Pittsburgh Presbytery Responds to the Gaza Genocide and Israel's Other Violations of Human Rights

Tom Twiss

On Thursday February 12, the Pittsburgh Presbytery voted to endorse two overtures that call upon the General Assembly of the PC(USA) to condemn the ongoing genocide in Gaza and encourage specific responses from the denomination to address Israel's violations of international law and human rights.

One overture was "[On recognizing that Israel has Violated the International Law Prohibiting Genocide.](#)" It condemns Israel's war on Gaza as a violation of the UN Convention against genocide, and supports a ban on U.S. military sales to Israel as well as a consumer boycott of Israeli products while Israel violates the law against genocide and other international human rights laws. The overture was taken to the Pittsburgh Presbytery by Sixth Presbyterian Church, where our session endorsed it unanimously last September, and by the Valley View Presbyterian Church in Garfield.

A second overture was "[Peace and Justice through Just and Peaceful Means: Overture on Embargoing Israel.](#)" This initiative was brought to the Presbytery by Valley View Presbyterian. It directs the Stated Clerk and the Office of Public Witness to demand a full U.S. trade embargo on Israel until it ends its occupation of Palestinian territory, abolishes its apartheid policies, demolishes its illegal separation wall, and grants Palestinian refugees the right of return. It also encourages members and bodies of the denomination to advocate for these demands.

The two overtures were approved as "concurrences" since they were previously adopted by other presbyteries. Both are now headed to the 227<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the PC(USA) this summer for consideration. Although a majority of the 100+ participants at the Presbytery meeting supported the two overtures, the votes for both were close. In the discussion, very different objections were raised by the two individuals who spoke against them.

One argued that the civilian deaths in Gaza were exaggerated and that the killings did not meet the definition of genocide. That speaker was simply uninformed. According to the Palestinian Health Ministry's count, which the Israeli military finally admitted was accurate in January of this year, fatalities from direct Israeli military fire have now exceeded 72,000. Of that number, 52% have been children, women, and the elderly. And a recent study by the U.K.-based nonprofit organization Action on Armed Violence estimates that approximately 83% of the Palestinians killed in Gaza have been civilians—a percentage that corresponds with figures from a classified Israeli military database revealed last summer. Although the rate of killing has slowed, over 600 Palestinians have been killed in more than 1600 ceasefire violations by Israel since the current "ceasefire" was announced. (It should be noted that none of these figures include the thousands of dead still buried under the rubble and those who died from disease or hunger.)

Because of facts like these, in July the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) wrote, "We must name what we are witnessing," noting that "increasing numbers of international legal scholars, Christian denominations, human rights organizations, and genocide experts ... have warned that the unfolding destruction in Gaza meets the criteria of genocide under international law." Groups that have reached that conclusion include two of the most prominent human rights organizations in Israel—B'Tselem and Physicians for Human Rights Israel—as well as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Oxfam, Doctors without Borders, a Commission of Inquiry of the UN Human Rights Council, UNRWA, the International Association of Genocide Scholars, and the World Council of Churches.

Another opponent of the overtures explained that, while that person largely agreed with the content of the overtures, they could not support the overtures because they might offend our Jewish neighbors. Of course, no supporter of the overtures wants to offend our neighbors. But there is no single position held by our "Jewish neighbors." In fact, the Jewish community is deeply divided on this issue. A recent poll by the *Washington Post*

found that 61 percent of American Jews believe Israel has committed war crimes in Gaza and 39% believe it is responsible for genocide. Among Jews between the ages of 18 and 34, 50% say Israel has committed genocide. Within Pittsburgh, there are also a number of Jewish organizations that name and work against genocide and apartheid in Palestine.

Aside from that, as another speaker in the meeting observed, the argument ignores how our church's actions and inactions might offend our Muslim and Middle Eastern neighbors in Pittsburgh. Along the same lines, we should take into consideration the feelings of our neighbors in the Holy Land, including our Christian siblings who have issued heartfelt appeals for the churches of the world to publicly condemn the genocide in Gaza and to advocate for measures that will bring it to an end.

But most importantly, as our Stated Clerk has observed, as Christians "we *must* name what we are witnessing." We are called to oppose *all* violations of human rights; there is no "Palestinian exception." That obligation was recognized by a majority of the participants in the February 12 Presbytery meeting.

[World Health Organization: Palestinian Casualties; "Israeli military accepts that 71,000 Palestinians were killed,"](#) *The Independent*, 29 Jan. 2026; ["Revealed: Israeli military's own data..."](#) *The Guardian*, 21 Aug. 2025; ["The IDF Admits It Killed 70,000..."](#), *Haaretz*, 29 Jan. 2026; ["Why Israeli claims of low civilian-to-combatant harm in Gaza do not hold up,"](#) AOA.org.uk, 26 Jan. 2026. A recent study in *The Lancet* medical journal argues that the Palestinian Health Ministry has undercounted violent deaths in Gaza by 35%. ["Violent and non-violent death tolls for the Gaza conflict,"](#) *The Lancet*, Feb. 18, 2026. ["Israel kills 11 in Gaza ...,"](#) *Al Jazeera*, 15 Feb. 2026; ["Israel continues to violate Gaza ceasefire ...,"](#) Middle East Eye, 22 Feb. 2026. ["The Rev. Jihyun Oh calls for urgent accountability ...,"](#) Presbyterian News Service, July 31, 2025. ["Many American Jews sharply critical of Israel ...,"](#) *The Washington Post*, Oct. 6, 2025. See also this report on a 2024 survey by the right-leaning think tank the Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs: ["Survey Among American Jews..."](#), May 31, 2024. ["Call to European Churches: Why are you silent in the face of genocide?,"](#) Global Kairos for Justice Coalition with the blessing of Kairos Palestine and Kairos Palestine chair Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah, Dec. 19, 2024; ["Kairos Palestine II. A Moment of Truth: Faith in a Time of Genocide,"](#) Kairos Palestine, Nov. 14, 2025.

## Earth Care Corner

It's March, and spring is coming! We'll be able to get outside and watch the amazing spectacle of the plant world as it bursts out in its many forms as it greens our surroundings. Looking forward to the new growing season, the Sixth Church Earth Care Team is happy to announce a new undertaking: Wild Indigo Guilds' Food Justice project.

The Earth Care Team has been authorized by Session to introduce this new project to our congregation. The Wild Indigo Guilds is a Pittsburgh-based organization cofounded by the Rev. John Creasy, former Pastor, Open Door Presbyterian Church; and Evan Clendenin. Formerly of Pittsburgh, Evan is currently living in Washington State.

In permaculture and nature, guilds are plant communities where individuals support one another, making for a healthier and more resilient ecosystem. Wild Indigo Guilds are small groups of people, often from congregations, who commit to learn together, dream together and build together toward a better world.

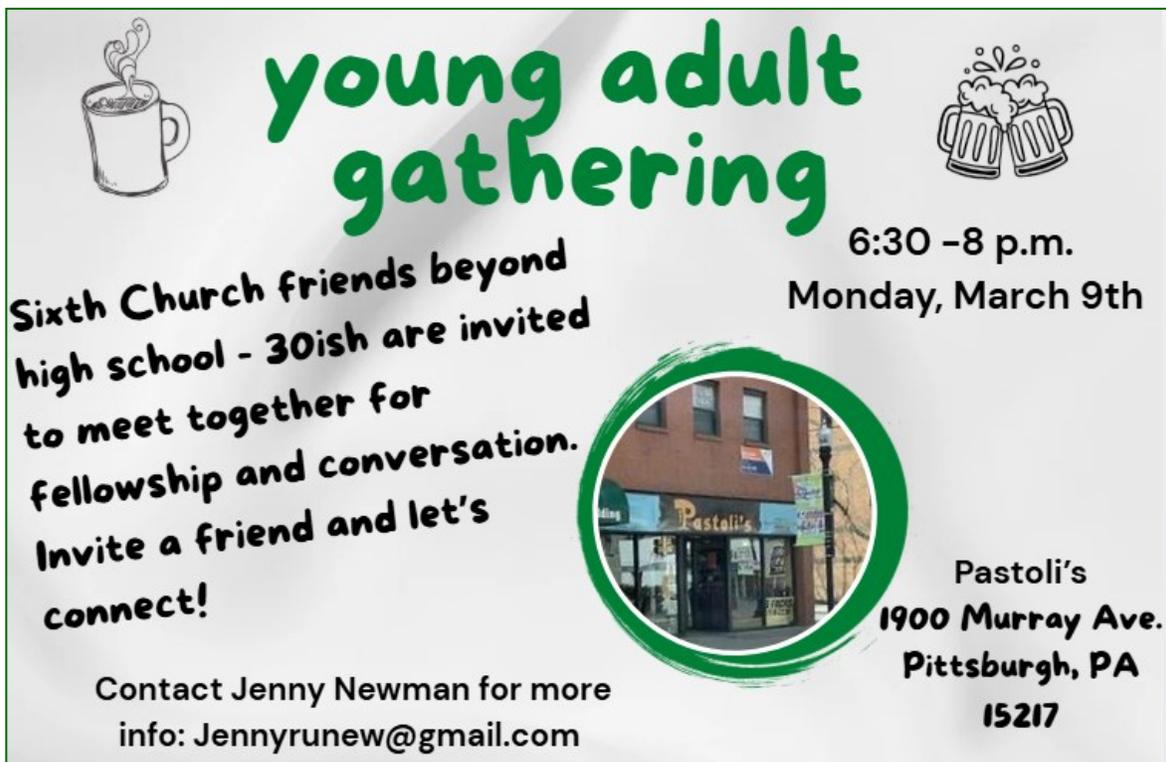


The process starts with gatherings where we discuss themes for exploration and discovery. These are experiential learning modules designed to help participants connect with God, others and the natural world. These eight modules are led by John and Evan, who are both spiritual directors and pastors.

During the second and third phases of each guild we get practical by creating plans for ecological restoration. During the final phase of the program John and Evan will coach us to implement our design plans.

The Earth Care Team invites the whole Sixth Church Congregation, members and friends alike, to join us in this exciting opportunity. We will be reaching out soon with more information about how to get involved, and we are looking forward to hearing from you.

*Next Earth Care Michael's Brothers Recycling Pickup: Sunday, March 15th*



**young adult gathering**

Sixth Church friends beyond high school - 30ish are invited to meet together for fellowship and conversation. Invite a friend and let's connect!

6:30 -8 p.m.  
Monday, March 9th

Pastoli's  
1900 Murray Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA  
15217

Contact Jenny Newman for more info: 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



# Session Meeting Highlights

## Sixth Presbyterian Church– Wednesday, February 25, 2026

### CALL TO ORDER/DEVOTIONAL TIME

#### CLERK'S REPORT:

- Worship: In Person/YouTube– 2/1 (65/34); 2/8 (75/42); 2/15 (77/29); 2/18-Ash Wednesday (48/14); 2/22 (76/35)
- Pittsburgh Presbytery 2026 Meeting Schedule
  - ◊ Thursday, April 30-Pittsburgh Theological Seminary at 1:00 p.m. Elder Beth Hazlett approved to attend.
  - ◊ Thursday, October 1-Crestfield Camp and Conference Center at 10:00 a.m. Elder Kate Davoli approved to attend
  - ◊ Thursday, December 10-TBD at 1:00 p.m.
- Clerk Training: Clerk, Kathi Robinson-Dassel attended on February 7, 2026, for refresher and updates.
- The annual Statistics report was completed and approved electronically and submitted to Pittsburgh Presbytery.

#### PASTORAL REPORT:

- Second round of meetings to be scheduled with committee chairs to see how committee restructuring is going and see what needs to be done to improve overall communication and involvement. A survey of congregational “gifts and talents” and an internal Mission Fair are among the ideas.
- Update of by-laws ongoing.

#### EXECUTIVE AND SPECIAL COMMITTEE UPDATES:

- **FINANCE:** Elder Beth Hazlett is looking to make some additions to online giving options.
- **PERSONNEL:** Elder Sara DeLucia reported that the annual reviews are in progress and should be completed by the end of Lent
- **HOUSE:** Elder Leslie Kaplan was unable to be at the meeting.

**COMMITTEE/WORKING GROUP REPORTS** were reviewed and action taken as needed.

#### COFFEE HOUR ASSIGNMENTS:

- April 5, 2026-Easter Fellowship
- April 19, 2026-Earth Care

**NEXT MEETING:** March 25, 2026, 7 p.m.

#### ADJOURNMENT & CLOSING PRAYER

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Kathi Robinson-Dassel, Clerk of Session*



The Sixth Sense newsletter comes out on the first Wednesday of the month.

**The deadline for April newsletter submissions is: Friday, March 27th.**

Please email articles and announcements to the church office at [officesixthchurch@gmail.com](mailto:officesixthchurch@gmail.com).

You can also put printed copies on the office desk.

Thanks you!



*February 5, 2026:*

*Sixth Church and ELPC youth gathered for Ice Skating at Schenley Park.*



*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

412-421-2752  
[officesixthchurch@gmail.com](mailto:officesixthchurch@gmail.com)  
[www.sixthchurch.org](http://www.sixthchurch.org)