

December 2018

Sixth Sense

From the Pastor

Advent and Christmas is the promise that the God who came in history and daily comes in mystery will one day come in glory. God is saying in Jesus that in the end everything will be alright. Nothing can harm you permanently, no suffering is irrevocable, no loss is lasting, no defeat is more than transitory, no loss or injustice is conclusive. Jesus comes, not to deny the reality of suffering, discouragement, disappointment, frustration and death; he simply stated that the Kingdom of God would conquer all of these horrors, that God's love is so prodigal that no evil could possibly resist it.

I can hardly wait for all of this and more.

Peace!

Vincent



SIXTH
presbyterian
CHURCH

December Worship and Preaching

December 2 – Luke 21:25-36,
“Will You Wait For Me at
Sixth?”

December 9 – Luke 3:1-18,
“Bad Dog Sermon”

December 16 – Children’s
Christmas Pageant

December 23 – Luke 1:39-45,
“Interrupted Family”

December 24 – Luke 2:1-20,
“Do Not Be Afraid”

December 30 – Rev. Myra
Kazanjian preaching

What the Pastor Is Reading

Why Religion? Elaine Pagels

*The Historical Jesus: The Life
of a Mediterranean Jewish
Peasant*, John Dominic
Crossan

*The Triumph of Christianity:
How a Forbidden Religion
Swept the World*, Bart
Ehrmann

In Pieces, Sally Field

Family Advent Dinner

Everyone is invited!

December 2, 5 to 7 pm

We hope you will join us for our annual Family Advent Dinner, Come and bring your family and friends to share a meal, Make an advent wreath to take home or make ornaments to decorate our Christmas tree in the Chapel. Come sing some carol and share in the Nativity story.



Ukulele Club

Ukulele Club for children and youth who want to learn. We will meet twice a month before Sunday school from 9:15 to 9:45 am. Kids in Kindergarten and up are welcome to participate!

We have some classroom instruments for those who are interested in trying it out or feel free to bring your own!

Upcoming dates: Dec. 9

*Sunday School Christmas Pageant
Sunday, December 16, during worship at 11 am!*

Notes for Parents:

- We will have a rehearsal for all kids involved on Saturday morning, Dec. 15 at 10 a.m. at the church. We will also be practicing during Extended Session this month.
- There will be no Sunday school on Dec. 23 and 30. There will be nursery child care and Extended Session.
- We will have child care for infants and toddlers during our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 7 pm Dec. 24th.

Please visit the Sixth Church Website at www.sixthchurch.org to read our Child Safety Policy, General Safety and Health Policy, or Fall Children and Youth Calendar.

Youth Group Happenings, December

Sunday School—Sunday school class for junior and senior high will be held each week (10 - 10:45 am) upstairs in Jenny Newman's new office Join Amy Whipple and Katrina Kennel for discussion on the week's scripture passages, current events, and other assorted topics. There will be donuts and drinks! There is no Sunday school Dec. 23 and Dec. 30.

Youth Fellowship at Crazy Mocha— Youth are invited for coffee and conversation at Crazy Mocha on Murray Ave. from 6 to 7:30 pm on Thursdays, Thursdays, Dec. 6, 13, and 20.

Questions? Contact **Jenny Newman at (412) 720-6392** or Jenny@Sixthchurch.org

Adult Education Opportunities in Advent

Advent is a time when we await the coming of Christ and we take stock of where we are in life's journey as the year comes to a close and a new year is in the offing. I want to propose the following Advent adult education offerings.

December 2—Sharing Our Story. We will use a simple spiritual journal exercise to trace the map of our lives and pair up with someone to share what that journey means to us as Advent begins. All that is required is that you bring yourself and your recollection of where you have been, and where you hope to go.

December 9—Uncovering Our Passion. Through a one-to-one conversation, we will explore what is it that gets us out of bed in the morning, and what is it that keeps awake at night. Participants will receive a brief refresher in what a one-to-one conversation is, then pair up and take turns learning about one another!

December 23—Lectio Divina. Through a process of silence and reflection and simple sharing, we will meditate on the text of Mary visiting with Elizabeth, when she discovered that she was going to bear the Christ child.

Other Upcoming Adult Education Opportunities

WINTER BOOK STUDY, January 6, 13, 20, 27

“How to Read the Bible and Still Be a Christian”: with John Dominic Crossan's book as a guide, we will explore the challenge of reading our Holy Book that contradicts itself, and puzzles as much as it illumines. Buying and reading the book is not required, but encouraged. Participants will have an opportunity throughout the class to think, pair, and share.

Lectio Divina

A small group has been meeting weekly at Sixth for “Lectio Divina” or “divine reading.” Simply put, it is a form of prayerful meditation based on a short passage from the Bible which is read aloud several times with silent focus first on what words “catch your ear”, continuing on to contemplation of how these words fit into your life.

Lectio is a practice which dates back to the 3rd century Church Father Origen, was subsequently developed in the middle ages by the Benedictine monks, and encouraged in modern times by the 2nd Vatican Council. From a contemporary perspective, one could say that it harnesses the subconscious or unconscious mind to allow connections to God to develop, encouraging the mysteries of faith to blossom as a small group communes, mostly in silence, with the richness of a biblical text. To my mind this is something like the experience an artist or composer has when a new work is in progress. Where do the ideas come from? They seem to materialize out of the shared silence in a miraculous way,

This is not “Bible Study” in the scholarly sense, nor a trick like that of putting a finger on a random Bible passage to find an answer to a problem. It is a technique for the creation of a silent space in the mind, which allows the many rich flavors of the biblical stew to swim into your awareness, which is of course a form of prayer. In Lectio this silence is framed and enriched by being in a group, a powerful reinforcement which I confess is difficult to explain, because the point is NOT discussion of the text in the usual sense, just a few spoken words without elaboration. At the end I feel recharged, peaceful and cleansed. And certainly better than I normally feel at that time of the evening, after watching MSNBC while I do the dinner dishes!

Lectio meets in the parlor at 6 pm on Thursday, December 6 and 20, before choir practice.

—Vicki Guy

Sixth Church and God's Creation

"No Plastic Please" is spreading! I'm hearing people use this phrase often, and it's very encouraging! Here's what it means: when I'm at a restaurant or retail store, I'll request "no plastic please" on the following targeted items: straw, bags, cups, take out boxes, plastic bottles, all Styrofoam, stirrers, and cutlery. I heard about *No Plastic Please* (NPP) from the animal rights group Humane Action Pittsburgh. You can find out more about this very effective group at <http://www.humaneactionpittsburgh.org/>. They initiated NPP after thinking about how much plastic pollution affects all animals, and their website is a great introduction to the program: <http://noplasticplease.net/>



Everyone can take part by taking the pledge: **"I pledge to eliminate single use plastic wherever possible for the purpose of reducing the suffering of all."**

Top 10 actions to eliminate single-use plastic

- Before ordering, just say "no plastic please!"
- Bring your own shopping bag.
- Carry a reusable water bottle.
- 4 Bring your own coffee cup.
- Pack your lunch/leftovers in reusable containers.
- Say NO to disposable straws & cutlery.
- Skip the plastic produce bags.
- Give up beverages in plastic bottles.
- Pay attention to plastic packaging.
- Share these tips with your friends.

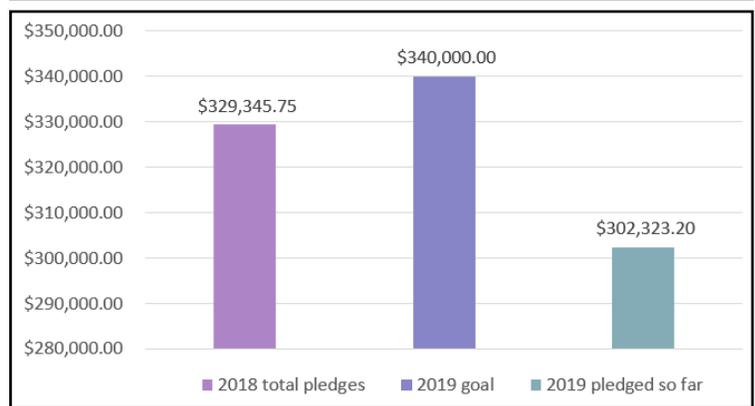
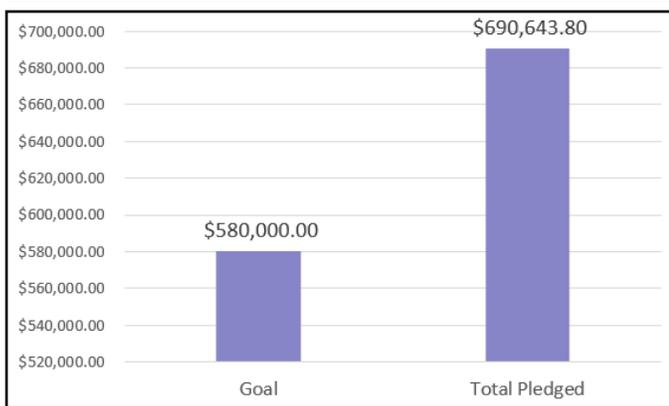
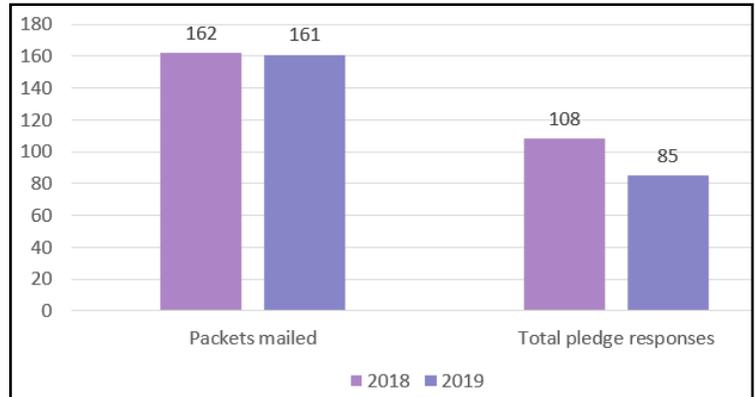
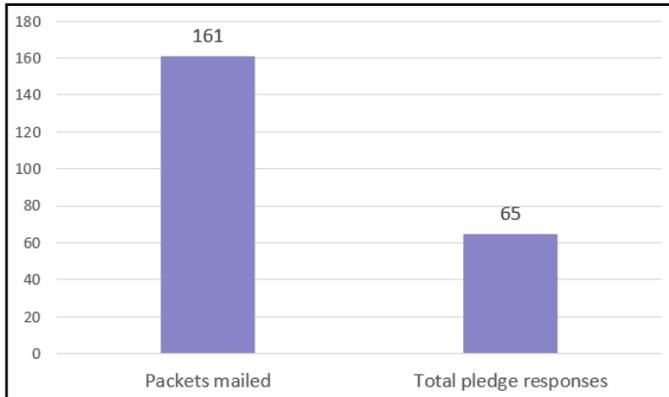
We can also sign up to be an "ambassador," and that's spelled out on the website. Happy single-use-plastic-free days!

—Nora Johnson

NOTE: Unfortunately, I've had to discontinue accepting writing instruments and scotch tape dispensers for our recycling program. If you have any of these stored up, please give them to me this one last time, but I won't be able to take them in the future.

Responses to the 2019 Annual Campaign

As you can see from the graphs, both the Capital and Annual Stewardship Campaigns are making great progress! We've exceeded the capital campaign goal and have reached 89% of the annual goal! The Campaign Coordinating and the Stewardship Committees are deeply grateful to all of you who have pledged! If you have not yet pledged, two-sided pledge cards are available in the sanctuary and the church office.



Annual Christmas Dinner

Sunday, December 16

Immediately following the Annual Christmas Pageant

Tables will be festively set.

Meat and beverages will be provided.

Bring a dish to share if you are able.

(Think about doubling the recipe!)

Everyone Is Welcome!



Christmas Poinsettias

Keep an eye out for order forms in upcoming bulletins or contact the church office.

December 2018 – Events and Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 7:00 pm, NA
2 9:15 am, Ukulele Club 10:00 am, Sunday School 11:00 am, Worship 12:00 pm, More Light 5:00 pm, Annual Stewardship Committee Meeting 5:00 pm, Family Advent Dinner 7:00 pm, Group of Ten 8:00 pm, NA	3 7:00 pm, NA	4	5 Alexandra DeJong 10:30 am, Bible Study 7:30 pm, Session	6 6:00 pm, Youth Group (Crazy Mocha) 6:00 pm, Lectio 7:30 pm, Choir	7	8 1:00 pm, Alopecia Support Group 7:00 pm, NA
9 9:15 am, Ukulele Club 10:00 am, Sunday School 11:00 am, Worship 12:00 pm, Earth Care 8:00 pm, NA	10 7:00 pm, NA	11 Nils Hammer Peter Watt- Morse	12 Mary Ellen Watt-Morse 10:30 am, Bible Study 7:00 pm, Deacons meeting	13 6:00 pm, Youth Group (Crazy Mocha) 7:30 pm, Choir	14 Jack Brennan Jacob Watt- Morse	15 Lara Miller 10:00 am, Sunday School Pageant Practice

December 2018 – Events and Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
16 Ellen Gaul Joan Markert 10:00 am, Sunday School 11:00 am, Worship 12:00 pm, Church Christmas Dinner! 8:00 pm, NA	17 7:00 pm, NA	18 Mark Bertolet	19 10:30 am, Bible Study 7:15 pm, Deacons	20 Louis DeLucia Carolyn Freeman 6:00 pm, Youth Group at Crazy Mocha 6:45 pm, Lectio 7:30 pm, Choir	21	22 10:00 am, Choir 7:00 pm, NA	
23 11:00 am, Worship 8:00 pm, NA	24 Carol Emerson 7 pm, Christmas Eve Service 7:00 pm, NA	25 Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27	28	29 Jesse DeLucia Ethan Greenley Allison Sennott Carlisle Turner Sterling Turner 7:00 pm, NA	
30 Benjamin Bates 11:00 am, Worship 8:00 pm, NA	31 7:00 pm, NA						

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...

We guard our world with locks and
guns

And we guard our fine possessions
And once a year when Christmas
comes

We give to our relations

And perhaps we give a little to the
poor

If the generosity should seize us
But if anyone of us should interfere
In the business of why there are poor
We get the same as the rebel Jesus

But pardon me if I have seemed
To take the tone of judgment

For I've no wish to come between
This day and your enjoyment

In a life of hardship and of earthly
toil

There's a need for anything that frees
us

So I bid you pleasure and I bid you
cheer

From a heathen and a pagan
On the side of the rebel Jesus

—Kate & Anna McGarrigle