

November 2018

# Sixth Sense

## From the Pastor

The hate crime at Tree of Life and the subsequent vigils and marches in support of the Jewish community and in opposition to the forces that foment division have shown us all once again how important our witness is at the corner of Forbes and Murray. Our values of justice, inclusion, and compassion are being questioned, and Squirrel Hill, for a brief period, has become ground zero for standing for those values.

As the funerals and the vigils and the marches have unfolded, our office has been receiving a steady stream of emails from all around the globe thanking us for being a beacon of light in a troubling time. Several of our Jewish neighbors were grateful we opened our doors for a prayer vigil hours after the massacre. One gentleman said, "once again, you have proven to be a vital part of the community." We received an email all the way from Vanuatu Island in the southwest Pacific, thanking us "for standing up for those in need of our love and care." A synagogue in Buffalo and a synagogue in Massachusetts conveyed their gratitude.

On Sunday, November 4, after we turn our clocks back on Saturday night, we will be gathering at 9:30 am in the Ridinger room for breakfast and a slide show of pictures from our 168 years of ministry and mission. We will then proceed upstairs for worship and dedicate our capital and annual campaign pledges, so that our ongoing ministry can thrive, and so that our home from which we do our work can be refurbished for the witness that is yet to come.

In response to the Session's challenge, I am going to raise my annual commitment by 5%, and I am going to dedicate an additional contribution of my 2019 gift to the capital campaign, paid out over 3-5 years. If you have not already made an advanced gift to the capital campaign (and if you have, thank you), I am asking you to do the same.

I want Sixth Presbyterian Church to be a place where God is felt, love is seen, and lives are changed. I hope you will join me in supporting this worthy endeavor.

Peace!

Vincent



SIXTH  
*presbyterian*  
CHURCH

## November Worship and Preaching

November 4 – Ruth 1, "The Lord Considered God's People, and Gave Them Food" (Dedication Sunday)

November 11 – Ruth 4, Ruling Elder Kate Davoli preaching

November 18 – Mark 13:1-13, "Birth Pangs"

November 25 – Rev. Sarah Robbins preaching



## 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:** Nov. 11, Dec. 9



## Youth Group Happenings, November

**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!

**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, Nov. 1, 5, and 8.

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

*Please visit the Sixth Church Website at [www.sixthchurch.org](http://www.sixthchurch.org) to read our Child Safety Policy, General Safety and Health Policy, or Fall Children and Youth Calendar.*

## Sacraments Class for Kids

In October we held a Worship and Sacraments class for the children of our church. The kids gathered in the Sanctuary to learn about baptism, communion and we baked Communion

bread to be used the next day on World Wide Communion Sunday. It's a great opportunity for the kids to get to explore the sanctuary, ask questions, and learn about worship.



## Upcoming Dates – Sunday School

It's that time of year again! Please mark your calendars for the following upcoming dates:

**Stewardship Sunday:** November 4– No Sunday school! Please bring your families for our Stewardship Breakfast during the Sunday school hour.

**Sunday School Christmas Pageant:** Our annual pageant will be presented on Sunday, December 16 during worship. We will have a rehearsal for all kids involved on Saturday morning, Dec. 15 at 10 am at the church. We will also be practicing during Extended Session starting this month.

## Save the Date

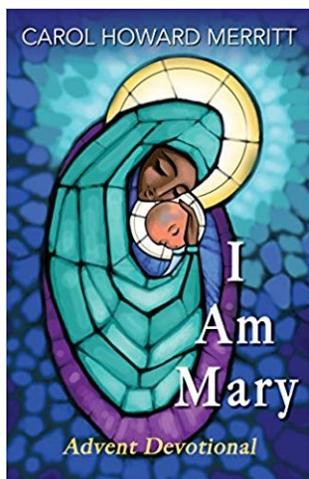
### Family Advent Dinner!

**Everyone is invited!**

We hope you will join us for our annual Family Advent Dinner, which will be held from 5 to 7:00 pm on Sunday, December 2. Come and bring your family and friends to share a meal, make ornaments to decorate our Christmas tree in the Chapel, sing some carols, and share in the Nativity story.

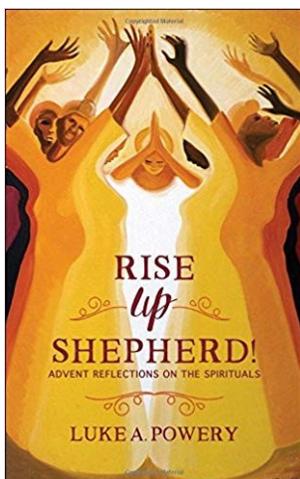
## Reading Suggestions for Advent

Here are suggestions for devotionals and daily readings for Advent! Ask your favorite local book seller to order one for you. These titles are also available for purchase through The Thoughtful Christian at [www.thethoughtfulChristian.com](http://www.thethoughtfulChristian.com) and other online booksellers.



**I am Mary:  
An Advent  
Devotional**

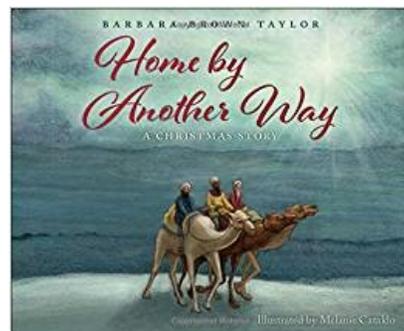
By Carol  
Howard  
Merritt



**Rise Up  
Shepherd!:**  
Advent  
Reflections  
on the  
Spirituals

By Luke A  
Powery

**For Kids**

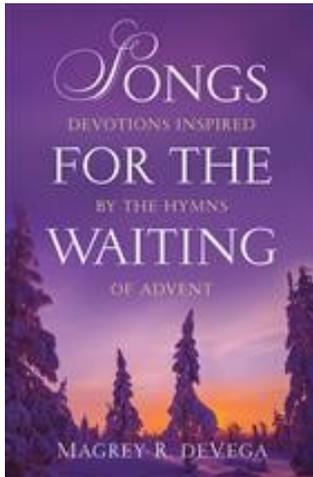
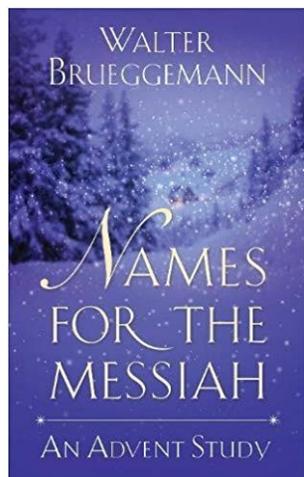


**Home by Another Way: A  
Christmas Story**

By Barbara Brown Taylor

**Names for the Messiah:  
An Advent Story**

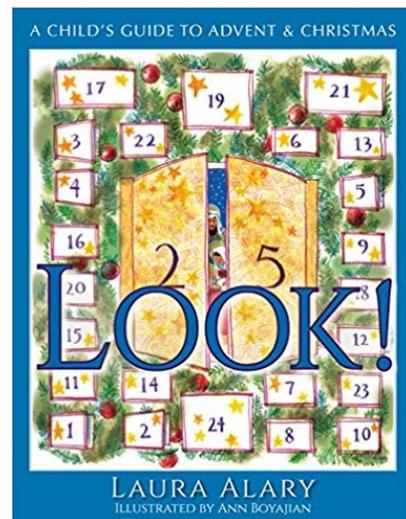
By Walter Brueggemann



**Songs for  
the Waiting:**  
Devotions  
Inspired by  
the Hymns  
of Advent

By Magrey  
DeVega

**Look! A  
Child's  
Guide to  
Advent and  
Christmas:**  
By Laura  
Alary



# We Won't Be Erased – Words from More Light Executive Director Alex McNeill

*Dear Sixth Church Friends: Like many of you, I reacted with anguish and anger to the news that the Trump Administration is considering narrowly defining gender as a biological, immutable condition determined by genitalia at birth, the most drastic move yet in a government-wide effort to roll back recognition and protections of transgender people under federal civil rights law. As a result, I am sharing with you excerpts from this essay by Alex Patchin McNeill, the Executive Director of More Light Presbyterians. The full essay can be found on the More Light Presbyterians website: <https://mlp.org/we-wont-be-erased>. I hope that you will take heart from his inspiring words and take action to defend the rights and humanity our trans neighbors. – Peter Kaplan*

As a publicly out transgender man, the ways in which the Trump Administration is working to “define transgender people out of existence” hits very close to home. This Sunday’s New York Times article reported that among other things, the administration wants to narrowly define gender as a “biological immutable condition determined by genitalia at birth,” denying the physical and lived reality of millions of Americans. With just eight words, the government wants to define our bodies, our consciousness, and our humanity, and give legal protection to the kinds of violence that are, right now, considered crimes punishable by law.

Trans and non-binary people already face enhanced body scans, pat-downs, and physical trauma in places like the TSA airport screening line. If this definition of sex becomes written into law, the Trump administration will also be guaranteeing that citizens will be forced to undergo more arbitrary tests of their gender expression, official and otherwise. Will the TSA screening room now become a doctor’s examination room? A prison cell?

In the statement, the Department of Health and Human Services also proposed conducting genetic testing to clarify any “disputes” about biological gender. Leaving aside the nightmare scenario where the government can compel a citizen to undergo genetic testing for the purpose of “proving” some aspect of their humanity, the reality is that 22 known transgender people this year have already been murdered simply because they didn’t pass someone’s test. Will people now be criminalized for how other people perceive the way their bodies convey the sex a stranger assigned them at birth? Will I, and many other transgender people who’ve changed their gender marker on their drivers license or birth certificate, have to change that marker back to an identity that does not fit who I am?

It’s thoughts like these that haunt me after reading this report, but I’m heartened by the dozens of people who’ve reached out to me to offer their support, love, and prayers. This show of solidarity has helped ease the fears I have for myself, my friends, for trans youth, for anyone who doesn’t fit into this medically and morally irresponsible and dehumanizing definition. It helped me remember that a definition is only as good as the paper it is written on and the people who enforce it. We have the ability and responsibility to counter this attempt at erasure with our visibility.

Already, trans folks and their family and friends have filled social media sites with photos and messages tagged #WontBeErased to declare, yet again, our existence is our resistance. If you are trans and/or non-binary and feel safe to be visible and share more about your experience, the world needs to hear from you. If you love someone who identifies as trans, or if you simply believe the government shouldn’t be policing citizens’ genitalia, I encourage you to use your privilege to speak out for the protection of those who stay quiet out of fear for their safety.

What I’ve learned in telling my story publicly is that we are in a moment when most people WANT to learn more about trans and non-binary people. If you have a story to tell, I encourage you to share your story. We cannot be erased if the world is committed to keeping us, and our stories, alive.

If you are feeling as frustrated as me right now, there are lots of ways you can support trans people and make sure no one is erased.

If you're looking for some more education to increase your confidence in engaging around trans inclusion, we recently released *Connecting the Dots Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation* as a two-part video series. It's a great way to learn more so you can help push back against transgender erasure. Check it out here: <https://mlp.org/connecting-the-dots-gender-identity-and-sexual-orientation/>

Worship can be a great way to be sure people in your congregation know that God loves trans people just as they are. This weekend, consider naming trans and non-binary people in the prayers of the people, or in your sermon. You could even read part of the GA overture "*Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities*" as part of worship:

Standing in the conviction that all people are created in the image of God and that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is good news for all people, the 223rd General Assembly affirms its commitment to the full welcome, acceptance, and inclusion of transgender people, people who identify as gender non-binary, and people of all gender identities within the full life of the church and the world. The Assembly affirms the full dignity and the full humanity of transgender people, their full inclusion in all human rights, and their giftedness for service. The Assembly affirms the church's obligation to stand for the right of people of all gender identities to live free from discrimination, violence, and every form of injustice. Making these affirmations, the Assembly acknowledges that the church has fallen short of these commitments and obligations. In the world and in the Church, transgender people too often experience and suffer discrimination and violence. The church has failed to understand fully and to celebrate adequately the full spectrum of gender embodied in God's creation. As a result, we have participated in systemic and targeted discrimination against transgender people, and we have been complicit in violence against them. The Assembly affirms the scriptural obligation to work for justice for all God's children, and particularly here to work for justice for people of all gender identities. We have fallen short of this obligation, and – by the grace of God – commit ourselves to do better.

Support transgender led organizations working hard to preserve and promote trans lives. Most transgender led organizations run on a shoestring budget, whether you support them with your dollars or even sharing about them with people in your life, a little goes a long way.

**More Light Presbyterians:** Yes! We are a trans-led and run organization working to center the voices of those often silenced in churches.

**Trans LifeLine,** fighting the epidemic of trans suicide and improve overall life-outcomes of trans people by facilitating justice-oriented, collective community aid

**Familia:** Trans Queer Liberation Movement founded at the beginning of 2014 by trans and queer immigrants, undocumented and allies, youth leaders and parents which organizes, educates, and advocates for the issues most important to our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) and Latino communities

**Sylvia Rivera Law Project:** SLRP works to guarantee that all people are free to self-determine their gender identity and expression, regardless of income or race, and without facing harassment, discrimination, or violence. SRLP is a collective organization founded on the understanding that gender self-determination is inextricably intertwined with racial, social and economic justice.

Immerse yourself in positive representations of trans and non-binary folks to explore the big, beautiful world of trans-created art.

**Them:** I'm currently getting inspiration daily from this incredible Instagram account and trans-led media/news company

**We Are Transilient:** A traveling photo and interview project featuring the daily lives of trans folks

**To Survive on This Shore:** a photo and interview project of transgender and gender non-conforming older adults. It's a beautiful project you can experience online or as a hardcover book!

**Together we can declare that God delights in trans identities and nothing can separate us from God's love and affirmation of who we are.**

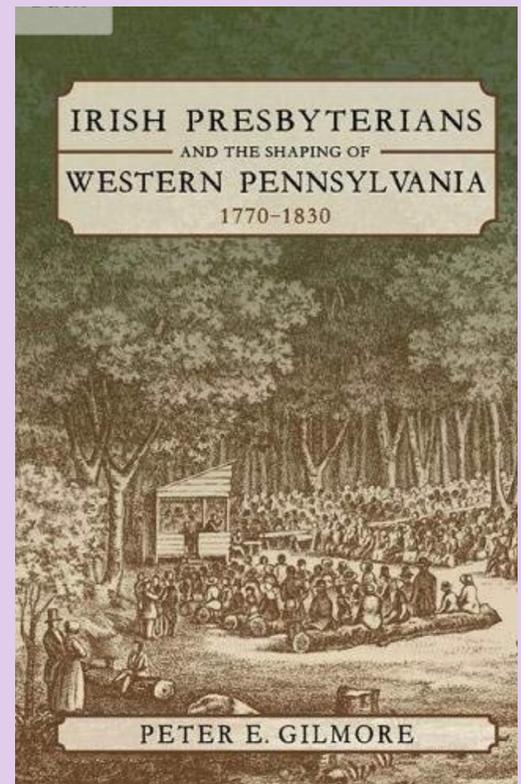
## Book Talk! With Peter Gilmore!

Sixth Church Elder Peter Gilmore will present a talk based on this new book *Irish Presbyterians and the Shaping of Western Pennsylvania, 1770-1830*.

Join us from 7 to 9 pm on Tuesday, November 27 in the church chapel. Child care will be provided and copies of Peter's book will be available for purchase.

## Poetry Talk! With Alina Vinyarsky!

Poetry reading and conversation on the topic of trust with Alina Vinyarsky. Sunday, November 18 at 10 am.



## Thanksgiving Food Collection!

Please partner with **The Wilkesburg Community Ministries** to help our neighbors have an extra **special** Thanksgiving by collecting the items listed below. The Food Bank will be distributing Thanksgiving boxes on November 19. **Our deadline for collection is Sunday, November 11.**

Suggested Donations (any non-perishable item is received with gratefulness):

- Box of Turkey Stuffing
- Can of Cranberry Sauce
- Canister or Box of Instant Oatmeal
- Box of Dry Cereal
- Canned Peas, Corn, Beans
- Corn Bread Mix
- **Cans of Hearty Soup (especially needed)**
- Box of Pudding

If you would also like to contribute funds or purchase \$10, \$15, \$20 or \$25 Giant Eagle gift cards then please contact the church office. Wilkesburg Community Ministry and the families that they serve will be most appreciative.

If you have any questions, please contact Sheila Kier, 412-784-8543. If you'd like to volunteer to help pack boxes for distribution, please contact Ruth Kittner, 412-241-8072

# Sunday, November 4 is Dedication Sunday

## Join Us for Breakfast at 9:30

This coming Sunday Morning, November 4, please plan to join your Sixth Church friends in the Ridinger Room, located in our church basement, to celebrate the official beginning of our Annual Stewardship Campaign and our ongoing commitment to the Capital Campaign to renovate our church home.

As many you know, this past weekend, Sixth opened its doors to hundreds of people seeking solace and fellowship as we grieved for the loss of members of the Tree of Life synagogue nearby. Once again, our church home and ministry have provided vital support to both its members and the larger community.

We want the Dedication breakfast to continue our fellowship and inspire us anew to carry out our work of justice, love, peace, and inclusion. As we gather, we will see a slideshow featuring highlights from our 168<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party held earlier this year. Let us come together to reflect and recommit ourselves to living out our faith and ensuring that our doors remain open to all who seek a spiritual home.

You recently received a mailing from Sixth Church which contains brochures on our Annual and Capital campaigns. If you haven't already done so by November 4, please bring your completed pledge card to church when you come to the breakfast, and either give it to a Stewardship Committee member (see list below) or better yet place it in the collection plate during the church service.

**Keep in mind that the pledge card is two-sided.** On one side, you can fill out your pledge for the Annual Campaign, and on the other, you can fill out your pledge for the Capital Campaign.

We hope that you can generously support the ministry of Sixth Church for the coming year through the Annual Campaign and ensure the future of our beautiful church building through a generous contribution to the Capital Campaign.

We look forward to seeing you at breakfast on Sunday, November 4.

**The Annual Campaign Stewardship Committee** – Peter Kaplan, Lauren Ward, Erik Fogt, Millie Barnes, and Patty Halverson

**The Capital Campaign Coordinating Committee** -- Bill Beggs, Marnie Bertolet, Marcus Robinson, Peter Kaplan, Leslie Kaplan, Rev. Vincent Kolb, Lauren Ward

## Hearing Assistance Survey

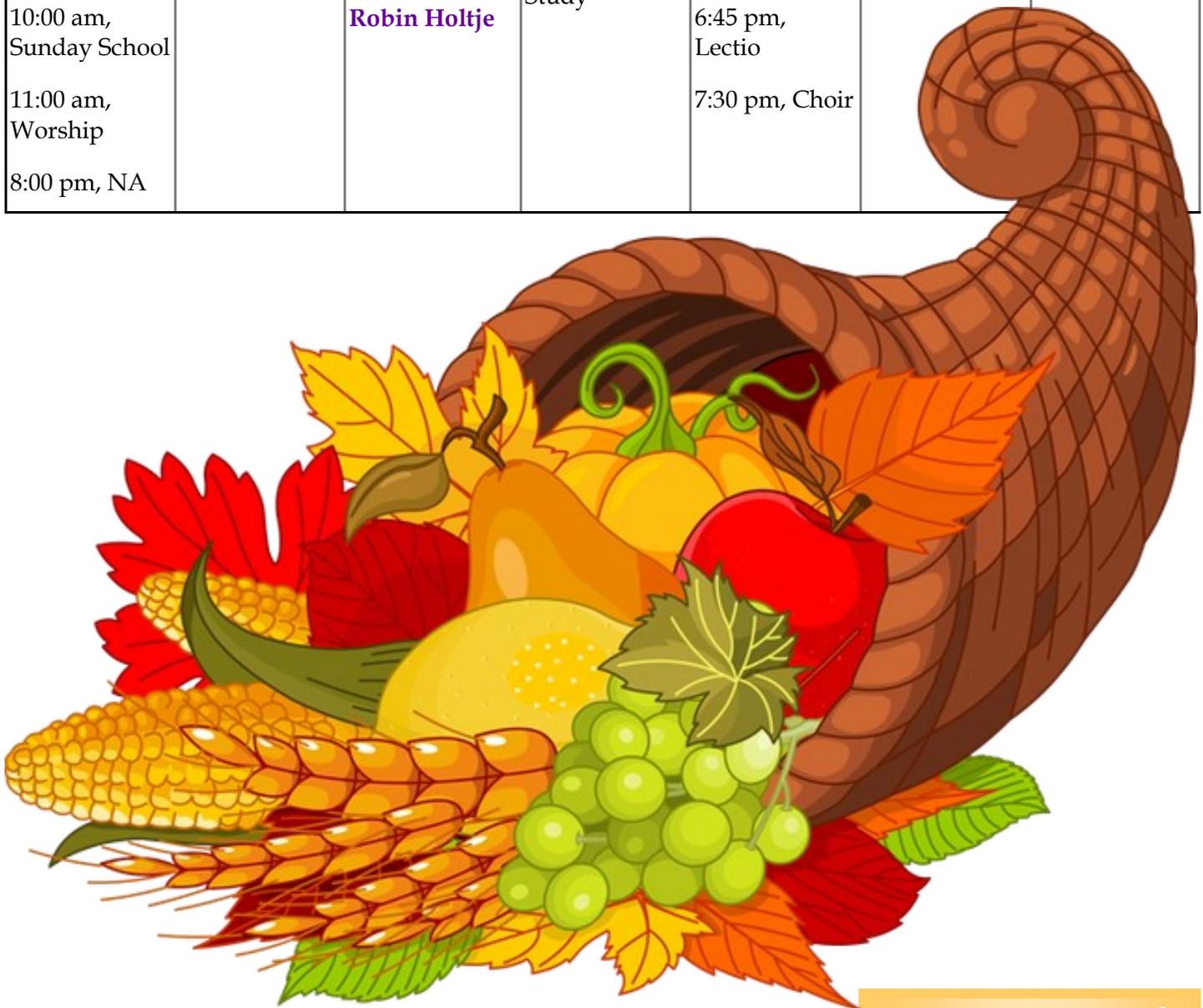
The House Committee is looking into a hearing assistance system for the sanctuary. We want to make sure that our hearing-impaired members and friends can fully participate in worship. There are several options being researched by Kirk Howe. Different systems interface with different kinds of hearing aids, so we need to find out what kind of hearing aid equipment members are using and how they feel about the various options. The House Committee will be sending out a survey in December and would like to invite anyone who is interested in participating in the survey to let Leslie Kaplan know. Please send her an email: [bezbeads@verizon.net](mailto:bezbeads@verizon.net), or call her: (412) 400-3459

## November 2018 – Events and Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<b>1</b> <b>Louise Craft</b> 6:00 pm, Youth Group (Crazy Mocha)  6:45 pm, Lectio  7:30 pm, Choir	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>  <b>Andrew DeJong</b>  <b>Alice Scales</b>  7:00 pm, NA
<b>4</b>  9:30 am, Stewardship breakfast  11:00 am, Worship  12:00 pm, More Light Committee (Parlor)  7:00 pm, Group of Ten  8:00 pm, NA	<b>5</b>  <b>Mary Crossley</b>  7:00 pm, NA	<b>6</b>  <b>Megan Fogt</b>	<b>7</b>  10:30 am, Bible Study  3:00 pm, Condo Association	<b>8</b>  6:00 pm, Youth Group (Crazy Mocha)  6:45 pm, Lectio  7:30 pm, Choir	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>  2:00 pm, Alopecia Support Group  7:00 pm, NA
<b>11</b>  9:15 am, Ukulele Club  10:00 am, Sunday School  11:00 am, Worship  12:00 pm, Stewardship Committee (Parlor)  8:00 pm, NA	<b>12</b>  <b>Nancy Wells</b>  7:00 pm, NA	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>  <b>Gabe Yancy</b>  10:30 am, Bible Study  7:15 pm, Deacons	<b>15</b>  <b>Joan Gaul</b>  6:00 pm, Youth Group (Crazy Mocha)  6:45 pm, Lectio  7:30 pm, Choir	<b>16</b>  <b>Grace Brennan</b>  <b>Brian Lazarus</b>	<b>17</b>  7:00 pm, NA

# November 2018 – Events and Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>18</b> 10:00 am, Sunday School  11:00 am, Worship & Congregationa l Meeting  8:00 pm, NA	<b>19</b> 7:00 pm, NA	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> <b>Bob Robinson            -Dassel</b>  10:30 am, Bible Study	<b>22</b> <b>Cosy            Cornelius-            Bates</b>  <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>23</b> <b>Lucy Brennan</b>  <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>24</b> 7:00 pm, NA
<b>25</b> <b>Laura Sindhi</b>  10:00 am, Sunday School  11:00 am, Worship  8:00 pm, NA	<b>26</b> 7:00 pm, NA	<b>27</b> <b>Elena Berg</b>  <b>Robin Holtje</b>	<b>28</b> 10:30 am, Bible Study	<b>29</b> <b>Dan Brennan</b>  6:45 pm, Lectio  7:30 pm, Choir	<b>30</b>	



Sixth Presbyterian Church  
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**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.*

## Food for Thought...



**The Deadline** for the December newsletter is Nov. 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!

"Yet the Puritan episode is a sitcom staple, maybe because TV networks have to broadcast something on Thanksgiving. But even when a sitcom is trying to be about something bigger-- like history, or teen pregnancy, or underage drinking-- sitcoms are like people, they're self-absorbed. What they're most interested in is themselves. And when they do history, they always put their own characters at the center of the story.

Take that *Happy Days* Thanksgiving episode in which it's revealed that the person who gave us Thanksgiving was not Squanto or William Bradford but the Fonz. That's right, the Fonz.

Here's how it went down. All the pilgrims were afraid of the Indians except pilgrim Fonzie, who was their friend. Then Joanie gets her foot caught in one of Potsie's stupid beaver traps. That Potsie. But you know that thing Fonzie does with the jukebox? Where he whacks it with his fist and the music plays? Turns out that works on beaver traps too. They open right up. But he won't free Joanie until everyone renounces their racism, and acts nice to the Indians, and invites them to dinner. Fonzie, he's the Martin Luther King of candied yams." — Sarah Vowell