

January 2020

# Sixth Sense

## From the Pastor

At the first of the year, we often take inventory of our lives and try to measure if we are succeeding at them. That leads us to ask questions like: "Is life turning out the way I wanted?" "Am I happy?" "Do I need to make changes?" In response to these questions, many of us have established New Year's resolutions. Most of these resolutions are about self-improvement. We resolve to eat better, exercise more, work less because we are determined to be careful and more disciplined. The last thing we want is for the new year to be worse than the last year. We don't want to lose ground.

But lately, because I am older, my desire to form resolutions has waned. I have asked myself, "what kind of resolution can I make to protect myself from the vagaries and uncertainties of life?" I don't think we should just "play it safe" in life, but I also know that life happens to us, regardless of all we have done to create security for ourselves.

There will be no guarantee of safety in 2020, no matter how careful we are. But according to the Biblical understanding of life, finding safety has never been our mission. Our mission has been to receive the grace of God and share it with others. That is quite a resolution to live up to all on its own! And it certainly involves vulnerability and risk, resolving to live as Christ would want us to live, with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

So, as we begin the new year, let us remember that life is never safe, but let us also resolve not to be careful. Let us resolve to take risks with a life we cannot keep, in order to experience more of the love of God we cannot lose.

Happy New Year!  
Vincent

## Adult Education Opportunities

Our Water Campaign: Sunday, January 12, 10 am, Church Parlor. Join Pastor Vincent as he shares the work of the Our Water Campaign in advocating for green infrastructure in the largest capital project in the history of southwestern Pennsylvania.

A Witness from the Border: Sunday, January 19, 10 am. Come to hear Rabbi Jeremy Markiz, Associate Rabbi at Beth Shalom, share his experience of visiting detention and migrant centers as part of a Jewish witness called T-ruah this past fall.



SIXTH  
*presbyterian*  
CHURCH

## January Worship and Preaching

January 5 – John 1:10-18,  
"The Stranger Has Come to Town"

January 12 – Acts 10:34-43,  
"The Last Person I Thought I Would Need"

January 19 – Isaiah 49:1-7,  
"Laboring in Vain"

January 26 – Psalm 27:1-4,  
"Is God Beautiful?"

## What the Pastor Is Reading

*The House of Broken Angels*,  
Luis Alberto Urrea

*Lake Success*, Gary  
Shteyngart

*The Darkening Age*,  
Catherine Nixey



**Save the Date!**  
**Family Overnight  
 Retreat at Camp  
 Crestfield  
 May 9-10**



**Youth Group Happenings**

**January**

**Sunday School:** Sunday School class for junior and senior high will be held each week (10 - 10:45 am) upstairs in Jenny Newman's office. Come for discussion on the week's scripture passages, current events, and other assorted topics. There is always hot chocolate!

**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 Thursday, January 9, 23, and 30.

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



# Sixth Church and God's Creation

## Recycling News

**At first glance, the news is not good:** Whole Foods is no longer taking all #5 plastic, just plastic cutlery, and that means that we can't take our plastic bottle caps there anymore. Whole Foods has a contract with the company *Preserve*, whose program 'Gimme 5' has changed its policy. Here's what they say:



The Gimme 5 Drop Off program is changing. Since Gimme 5 was founded in 2007, access to #5 recycling has increased tremendously. Many of the items that once found a recycling home in the Gimme 5 bin (such as yogurt cups and hummus tubs) can now be recycled locally. Because of this, we are now changing our focus for in-store collection at Whole Foods Market to be on an item that still faces recycling challenges: the plastic cutlery that is used for in store dining. Although it is not yet in all regions, in-store Gimme 5 collection at Whole Foods Market is changing to focus on cutlery, with all other #5 recycling through Gimme 5 being directed to mail in. Learn more about this change [here](#).

Since Gimme 5 will accept plastic caps and other #5 plastic items only if we mail them in to their facility in Cortland, NY, I intend to do just that. So I'll still be collecting the caps, and please continue to save them and bring them in.

It must be said that the Preserve company does not seem to realize that municipal recycling opportunities for #5 plastics have actually gotten fewer recently as programs change to accepting only bottle- and jug-shaped containers. And if the market becomes flooded with cheap virgin plastic, recycling will be even less likely.

**If you are confused** and wondering about what to recycle and how, you are not alone! We want to be good stewards, and knowing that we have growing mountains of trash, much of it plastics, is discouraging. We are very aware that China and other Asian countries are no longer willing to be dumping grounds for our waste, and it's hard to blame them. We also know that recycling alone is not going to pull us off the horns of this dilemma, and that we need to produce much less plastic, especially single-use plastic, and find other ways to package our stuff. Plastic is a major health hazard and climate polluter both as it's manufactured and as it's used and disposed of.

**So do keep on recycling what you can.** In Pittsburgh, you can leave the following on the curb for the recycling trucks: metal cans/bottles/aerosols (no loose lids), glass bottles and jars, mixed paper (including office paper, mail, books, and paperboard/chipboard), plastic bottles, jugs, and jars (no clamshells, cups, or tubs), and cardboard (flattened and bundled into another box: no greasy pizza boxes). No lids or caps are accepted. The City is now discouraging blue bag use and you can sign up to get a blue can here: <https://pittsburghpa.gov/blue-bin-info/index.html> Shredded paper must now be taken to one of the DPW drop-off centers (except Beltzhoover/Knoxville).

To go a step further, you can join the City of Pittsburgh in the following pilot drop-off dedicated collection programs. Call 311 or the Mayor's office and tell them you are happy with this option. The glass and mixed paper described above can now be taken to the following locations and placed in dedicated dumpsters where it will be picked up by a separate truck: Construction Junction drop-off center, DPW center at 3001 Railroad St. in the Strip District, DPW center in Beltzhoover/Knoxville at McKinley Skate Park parking lot. This avoids contamination and increases the recycling rate.

*Continued on the next page*

The best we can do is stop buying salad in plastic tubs, avoid bakery clamshells, and buy food and beverages in cans and glass jars whenever possible. Shop bulk when you can.

This short article can't answer all the questions you'll have: for that read more at <https://pittsburghpa.gov/dpw/residential-recycling> and check out the 'Recycle This Pittsburgh' website: <https://recyclethispgh.com/>. If they don't list what you're looking for, they'll find the answer for you. And keep on keepin' on.

–Nora Johnson

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## Notes from the December Session Meeting

*(NB: notes from Session are pulled from yet-approved minutes)*

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### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from Session meeting 11/20/19 were passed with 2 modifications...the Executive Committee's House update of the downstairs kitchen commercial grade disposal should have read that it was repaired (rather than installed), and Larry Chan should have been included in the new Elder's class of 2022. (Also the title should have read "Minutes" rather than "Agenda.") The Congregational meeting minutes on 11/24/19 were approved with the addition of Larry Chan to be ordained and installed as an Elder for class of 2022.

### CLERK'S REPORT

Worship Attendance 11/24:144; 12/1:125; 12/8:149; 12/15:158.

### EXAMINATION OF DEACONS Kyle Esbin, Lynn Kawaratani, Eliot Kennedy

- Each incoming Deacon was asked some questions about new things they learned in training and their expectation about their upcoming role in church leadership.
- ⇒ **Motion** to suspend examination and approve the ordination and installation of Kyle Esbin, Lynn Kawaratani, and Eliot Kennedy on January 26 was passed unanimously. A prayer was given by Pastor Kolb expressing gratefulness for their willingness to serve the church as Deacons.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- FINANCE: November Financials were briefly reviewed (please see New Business section below regarding budget)
- HOUSE: Current projects were reviewed.
- PERSONNEL: Annual Review Report – the 4 church employees 2019 work was reviewed and was deemed as exceeding expectations. Employees seem to be happy and grateful for their proposed pay increases and new health insurance coverage options.
- STEWARDSHIP: Follow Up Report –Lauren Ward updated the Session on the progress of the stewardship campaign. It is hoped that a strong year end balance will help the Session meet the goals of the proposed 2020 budget.

### 2020 POTENTIAL GOALS

Session members gave 1-3 priority rankings to each of the 7 goals (listed in last month's minutes) and discussed their rationale.

### PASTORAL CARE UPDATES & DEACONS' REPORT (Kolb)

Some brief information was shared about people in the church in need of assistance in various ways.

## REPORT FROM PRESBYTERY

Pastor Kolb and Elder Leslie Kaplan gave an update from the Presbytery meeting they attended, mentioning that a new local Presbyterian Vietnamese congregation has been chartered.

## OLD BUSINESS

- Jenny will plan to present her continuing education project update (Children and Youth Revisioning) to session on either Feb 11<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> (date TBD).
- Pastor Kolb explained some recent discussion about how to help support Kate Davoli's ministry, possibly through 1001 Worshipping Communities.

## NEW BUSINESS

- **Budget:** It was determined that the meeting planned for Jan 8<sup>th</sup> would be an Executive Committee meeting open to all active Session members, focused on solidifying the budget for 2020. A year-end estimate (rather than final figures) can be used for this discussion. Mary R. plans to resend the drafted budget once final pledge figures are available. She is still awaiting 2020 proposals from several committee chairs. The budget will be discussed and voted on at the stated Session meeting Jan 29<sup>th</sup>, and then presented to Sixth Church at the Congregational/Corporation meeting on February 2.
  - Also at this Jan 8<sup>th</sup> meeting will be an examination of the new Elders (a quorum of at least 5 session members will be needed), to be ordained/installed during the church service on Sunday Jan 26<sup>th</sup>.
- ⇒ **Motion** to have the annual congregational/corporate meeting on Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 12 noon was approved without objection.
- ⇒ **Motion** to approve presenter Pete McQuillin from Penn Forest Natural Burial Park on 2/2 at 10am at Sixth Church was passed without objection.
- ⇒ **Motion** to approve Reverend Alex Patchin McNeill (Exec Dir of More Light Presbyterians) to preach at Sixth Church on May 3<sup>rd</sup> was passed without objection.
- Pride was moved from mid June to mid July at Point State Park this year (not sure how that will affect the People's parade)

## COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Some info was briefly given, as per the written committee updates.

## NEXT MEETINGS:

- January 8, 2020 is an Executive Committee meeting open to all active elders (to finalize the budget and examine incoming elders who can be ordained/installed in church on Jan 26<sup>th</sup>),
- January 29, 2020 is the stated session meeting of the new session (2020 budget will be discussed/voted on, and roles of outgoing session members will be handed off to incoming/existing session members as needed),
- February 2, 2020 will be the Congregational/Corporate meeting to review the 2020 budget and approve Pastor Kolb's terms of call for 2020.

## MEETING WRAP-UP

- Appreciation given to Chris Pistorius, Tom Twiss, and Clerk Jen Joy for their service to the church on this, their last Session meeting.

*It has been a sincere honor and a privilege to be your Clerk of Session for the past 2 years, thank you so much for giving me this opportunity!*

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Joy, Clerk of Session

## January 2020 – Events and Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Office Closed	2 Scott Bell	3 Rachel Rothenberg	4 7:00 pm, NA
5 10:00 am, Returning Elder Orientation (Parlor) 10:00 am, Sunday School 11:00 am, Worship 12:30 pm, Teachers/ Childcare Staff Security Plan Meeting 8:00 pm, NA	6 7:00 pm, NA	7 7:00 pm, OCD Support Group	8 11:00 am, Bible Study 7:00 pm, 14th Ward Democrats 7:00 pm, Executive Committee (Parlor)	9 6:00 pm, Youth Group (Crazy Mocha) 7:30 pm, Choir Rehearsal	10	11 Meghan Jones Debbie Phillips 7:00 pm, NA
12 10:00 am, Sunday School 11:00 am, Worship 8:00 pm, NA	13 David Myers- Newbury 7:00 pm, NA	14 3:00 pm, Fiberarts Guild 7:00 pm, OCD Support Group	15 11:00 am, Bible Study 7:00 pm, Deacons	16 7:30 pm, Choir Rehearsal	17 7:00 pm, OCD Support Group gathering	18 Jennifer Joy 7:00 pm, NA
19 10:00 am, Sunday School 11:00 am, Worship 8:00 pm, NA	20 7:00 pm, NA	21 7:00 pm, OCD Support Group	22 11:00 am, Bible Study 7:00 pm, Bend the Arc Public Meeting	23 6:00 pm, Youth Group (Crazy Mocha) 7:30 pm, Choir Rehearsal	24	25 7:00 pm, NA

# January 2020 – Events and Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>26</b> <b>Vicki Guy</b> 10:00 am, Sunday School 11:00 am, Worship 8:00 pm, NA	<b>27</b> 7:00 pm, NA	<b>28</b> 7:00 pm, 14th Ward Democrats 7:00 pm, OCD Support Group	<b>29</b> 11:00 am, Bible Study 7:00 pm, Session	<b>30</b> 6:00 pm, Youth Group (Crazy Mocha) 7:30 pm, Choir Rehearsal	<b>31</b>	

## An Update from Our Friend, Olena Tumanova

*Dear friends,*

*I miss you dearly. You continue to be my inspiration as I discern how I am called to be in this next stage in my life. Thank you for embracing me in my intensity and my joy. I love you all,*

*Olena*

“The Living Storm”

This is intense.  
 I find it hard to write.  
 Words seem too meaningless  
 To give expression to my feelings.

The words I find,  
 They seem to trivialize,  
 To flatten what I’m going through,  
 To miss the meaning.

They seem to talk  
 About ocean waves,  
 When what I’m feeling are the currents  
 That flow, powerful, underneath –

Most of them love,  
 Some of them grief –  
 And then the rapid winds that blow  
 Away what I had hoped would stay.

Where all these meet  
 Is not a raging chaos.  
 A living storm’s  
 Inside me in full swing –

And I am awestruck  
 As I face it,  
 For I have heard  
 The winds and currents sing.

*Olena Tumanova*  
*St. Catharines, Ontario*  
*July 2019*

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**Dated Material - Do Not Hold**

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*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 February newsletter is January 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...

“Most of the time the universe speaks to us very quietly in pockets of silence, in coincidences, in nature, in forgotten memories, in the shape of clouds, in moments of solitude, in small tugs at our hearts.” – Yumi Sakugawa

“Kindness, kindness, kindness.

“I want to make a New Year’s prayer, not a resolution. I’m praying for courage.” – Susan Sontag

“We have proved, sitting eating, sitting talking, that we can add to the treasury of moments.... We are creators. We too have made something that will join the innumerable congregations of past time. We too, as we put on our hats and push open the door, stride not into chaos, but into a world that our own force can subjugate and make part of the illumined and everlasting road.” – Virginia Woolf