



# • Windows •

The newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown  
December 2019



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Items for the January issue of Windows are due on **Dec. 17th**. Send to [communications@fpcgermantown.org](mailto:communications@fpcgermantown.org)

## From the Pastor

We have entered the time of Watching and Waiting that is Advent. Contrary to our secular culture’s celebration of Christmas beginning around November 15, we Christians have historically been called to spend the four weeks before Christmas in a time of recognition that the world is broken and desperately in need of a Savior. This feels more pertinent than ever before to me. You can’t turn on the television or the radio, pick up a newspaper, or go on social media without being barraged by impeachment hearings, conflict in the Middle East, gun violence, and more, producing communal anxiety and dismay.



I have been finding comfort these days in Habakkuk 2:1-3a: “I will stand at my watchpost, and station myself on the rampart; I will keep watch to see what (God) will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint. Then the Lord answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time.” Habakkuk’s context is one in which the Israelites have been exiled from home and community, and are longing for respite. It has not come, and may not come for a while, but the message is one of God’s faithfulness, and our call to faithfulness in times of struggle as well. When God tells Habakkuk to write the vision so that a runner may see it, God is saying to write it large, on the walls of the city so that a messenger running between towns will see it as he comes from a distance. God’s vision of Beloved Community should be that visible to all who come to The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown this season or any other.

I have a PostIt note hanging from my computer in my office that says: “Diversity ≠ Inclusion.” The first is a description of what is; the second describes a style of interaction. In Isaiah 11, we are told what the world will be like when the Kingdom comes: “the wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.” The description of all the creatures is Diversity, how they are acting in harmony together is Inclusion.

This is God’s vision for us – that we, in our Diversity, live together in Inclusion. That all who come to the table are fed. Physically and Spiritually. When we look at our world, our country, our community, our church, our individual families, it is clear that we are not always honoring all voices. Yet this is what Christ calls us to do, who Christ calls us to be.

It is my prayer this Advent season that we will strive, individually and as a community of faith, to listen to one another, to open ourselves to differing points of view and consider how all might be welcome, to watch and to wait and to write the Vision of the Beloved Kingdom in large capital letters on our hearts and in our actions, that all who come near might see it: God’s love made visible for all.

- Rev. Rebecca Segers



## JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

Sundays at 10 a.m.

Everyone is invited to worship, study and enjoy friendships at The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown. There are service, outreach and fellowship opportunities in abundance. In addition to weekly and monthly scheduled services and activities, visit [www.fpcgermantown.org](http://www.fpcgermantown.org) and click on Special Events web pages for more information.

To learn more, please email [fpcg.germantown@gmail.com](mailto:fpcg.germantown@gmail.com) or call the church office at 215-843-8811.

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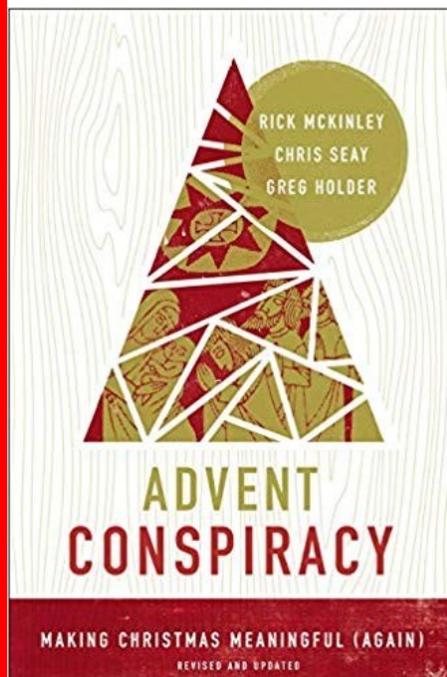
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## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Watches & Waits for Change!

November's 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday event focused on Watching and Waiting. We read Isaiah 11:1-9, the prophecy of the Peaceful Kingdom, and then made ornaments for an "Advent Calendar Tree" that will be on display during the season at First Pres.

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in December will continue to look at change, this time focusing on the scripture where Mary and Elizabeth meet while they are both pregnant. We will consider the ways their lives are about to change, as well as the ways in which we experience change in our lives as well. Won't you join us on Sunday, December 15, 2019 immediately following worship to not just ponder change but to plant literal seeds in the pots we decorated during our discussion/study time in October.



## The Real Spirit of Christmas

This year, the Christian Education Committee is hosting an Advent Bible Study to get us into the true spirit of Christmas.

The purpose of *Advent Conspiracy* is to show us how to substitute consumption with compassion by practicing four simple but powerful, countercultural concepts: Worship Fully—because Christmas begins and ends with Jesus. Spend Less—and free your resources for things that truly matter. Give More—of your presence: your hands, your words, your time, your heart. Love All—the poor, the forgotten, the marginalized, and the sick in ways that make a difference. This year, let's have a Christmas worth remembering, not dreading. Christmas can still change the world when we, like Jesus, give what matters most—our presence.

We will be meeting at Andrea Overton's home, 509 Murdoch Road, Philadelphia 19119 for four consecutive Tuesday evenings: November 26<sup>th</sup>, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:15 p.m. for dinner with the study starting promptly at 7:15 p.m. If you are not able to be with us for dinner, feel free to join us for the study only.

# December Birthday's

Alfred Knup	12/04	Kadeem Carter	12/16
Susan Mills MacDonald	12/06	Christopher Scott, Jr.	12/17
Kelsi Scott-Lundy	12/08	Eugene Gardenhire	12/18
Lechelle Garnett	12/12	Kamsi Akutah	12/19
Ingrid Harris	12/13	Contina Lundy	12/23
Tara Payne-Jones	12/13	Betty King	12/27
Florence Smith	12/13	Bernetta Washington	12/28
Jasmine Greene	12/14	Joshua Overton	12/28
Victoria Solomon	12/14	Dante Daniel	12/31
Taye McCord-Amasis	12/15		

**Total December Birthday's = 19**

## DECEMBER CHALLENGE OFFERING PRESBYTERIAN JOY OFFERING

During the Christmas and Advent season, we celebrate leadership—past, present and future—through support of the Christmas Joy Offering. We do because church leaders greatly impact our lives of faith and we want these leaders and their families who are grappling with a critical financial need to have the resources they need which are provided through the Assistance Program of the Presbyterian Board of Pensions. For those supported through the Christmas Joy Offering, this help is truly a gift from above. The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s.



## A MEDITATION FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

As you seek refuge,  
I will make room for you.  
As you seek to be heard,  
I will make time for you.  
As fears surround you,  
I will be with you - as God is with me.  
As the darkness deepens,  
I will light a candle for you.  
Poor as we are,  
I will give you the gift of myself.  
Rich as we are,  
I will receive you as God's gift to me.  
In life and in death,  
We belong to God and to each other.

**Don Carlin, December 2019**

## CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS

The poinsettias in the sanctuary during the Christmas season are in memory and honor of our loved ones. As is our custom, these flowers will be delivered after Christmas to the sick and shut-in of our congregation. Please contact the church during office hours: Monday through Friday from 9AM to 1PM if you would like your family members' or friends' names included in the worship bulletin. The cost is \$15 per line. Listings will be accepted until Monday, December 16, 2019.

# YOUTH NEWS

10 senior high students along with 2 adult chaperones for FPCG enjoyed a weekend together in Johnsonburg, NJ at a PCUSA retreat center there. Through worship and teaching, small groups and free time, shared meals and conversation, we and 7 other church groups gathered to love God and learn more about our faith. Here are a few pictures of our time together. Thanks to all who held us up in prayer. We had a meaningful and fun time with each other. Special thanks to Andrea Overton for serving our youth all weekend long!



Continuing our Windows section called the Good News Youth Corner, this section will be devoted to lifting up some of the great things that our young people are experiencing and accomplishing. Any parent or member is welcome to share some good news big or small about one of the young people who participate in our community and ministry. Email Cheresé Akers at [communications@fpcgermantown.org](mailto:communications@fpcgermantown.org).

Elisa Heyer-Rivera will be in a musical held at the Circus School on December 13 and 14th. She will dance at another venue on Dec. 15th. Come enjoy kids in our community performing or simply give Elisa an encouraging word pre or post performance. Call Christian or Sheila for times and details.



# Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry News!

## Thanksgiving Baskets

GACM served 201 families with holiday baskets that contain everything needed for a traditional turkey dinner. Baskets are provided for those for whom purchasing a holiday meal would be a hardship. Crisis Ministry clients are asked to show identification and to document family size and income. While serving our NW Philadelphia neighbors we don't want to miss an opportunity to be a source of help and blessing to those within our church family. If you know of a church member or friend needing a Christmas basket, speak to your deacon or see Eileen Jones or Randy Clever.



## Loving God Loving Neighbors

FPCG Sunday School children prepared cookie packages to be shared with those receiving Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry Thanksgiving Baskets. Each parcel had a cover "Thank you for being our neighbor" along with personal notes wishing the recipient Happy Thanksgiving. These special gifts were given to seniors. Each loved seeing the children's handwritten notes and were very happy to receive a sweet treat!



## Winter Warmth Drive

*Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry is collecting coats and other items needed for warmth. Coats, blankets, hats, etc. should be clean, new or gently used. Our give-a-way will take place Wednesday & Thursday, December 11 & 12. 9:30AM – 1PM*



Volunteers are needed for set-up and distribution.  
Let us know what time is best for you.

**Sort & Set-up** — Tuesday, Dec 10, 9:00 -12:00pm  
**Distribution** — Dec 11 & 12, 8:30am -1:00pm

## FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

F. Anthony Thurman, Music Director

### McLean Memorial Organ Centennial Concert Series

We are flinging wide our doors and inviting the public to join us in celebrating the Centennial Anniversary of our McLean Memorial Organ, the largest church organ in Philadelphia. When it was dedicated on April 27, 1919, it was the second largest organ, after the Wanamaker, in the City. The organ was a gift by Mrs. William L. (Sarah) McLean in memory of her son Warden, an American soldier who died during World War I. The organ contains more than 7,000 individual pipes of both wood and metal ranging in size from a pencil to a telephone pole.

*Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza* with Clara Gerdes, the first event of our series, was held on Nov. 10. More than 50 children, youth, and adults attended this free program to learn more about the organ and how it works. Participants were given a tour of the pipe chambers by Emery Brothers, the curators of our organ, and some time at the organ console. A pizza dinner was served at the end of the day in Longstreth Auditorium.



On Nov. 17, the 1927 WWI silent film *Wings* was screened with improvised organ accompaniment by **Peter Krasinski**, winner of the AGO National Competition in Organ Improvisation. Approximately 75 movie goers attended and enjoyed a popcorn reception and fellowship in Longstreth auditorium following. The movie was presented in commemoration of Veteran's Day, in honor of all those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, and in memory of Lt. Warden McLean.

Looking ahead: **Marvin Mills and the Philadelphia Brass** will perform on **Sunday, January 19, at 4 p.m.**

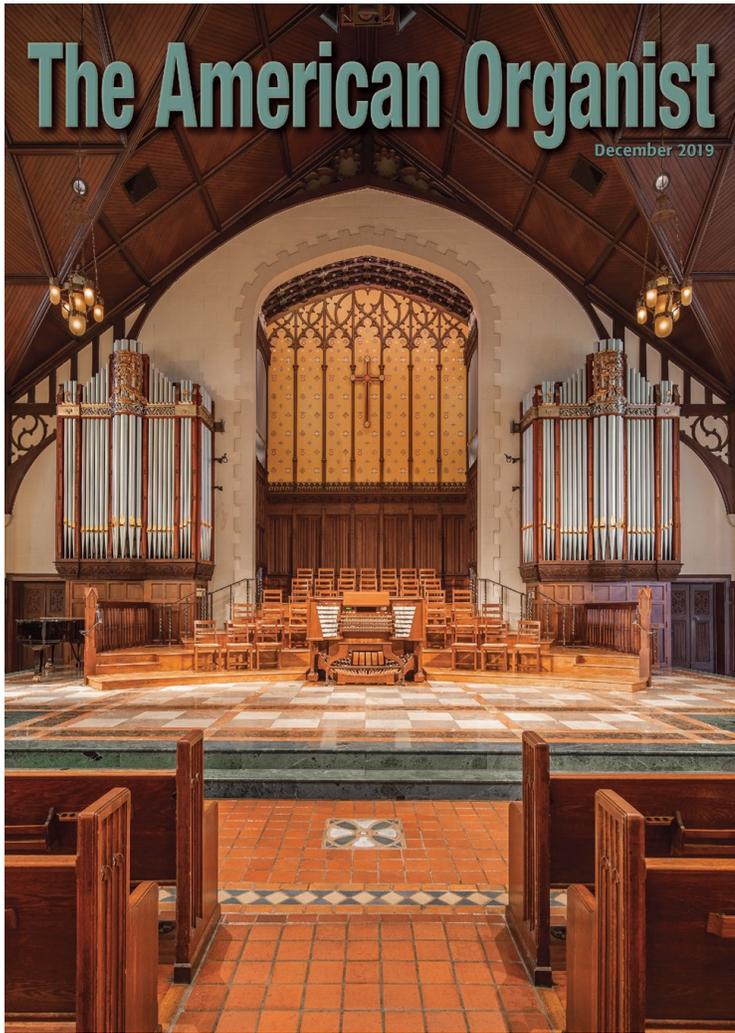


Major funding for this series is provided by members and friends of First Church. Additional support is provided by the American Guild of Organists, and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

(Music News cont. on page 7)

# The American Organist

December 2019



## In the News

(Music News continued from page 6)

The McLean Memorial Organ is featured on the cover of the December issue of *The American Organist* magazine, the official journal of the American Guild of Organists and the Associated Pipe Organ Builders of America. The feature article, *The McLean Memorial Organ: Its History and Evolution (1919-2019)* can be read online at <https://bit.ly/33ckzxD>. The *Chestnut Hill Local* also printed a story about our organ and the centennial anniversary concert series. It can be found online at <https://bit.ly/331AAGQ>. ABC news filmed portions of the *Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza* on November 10 and broadcast the story on the PHL17 and Channel 6 Action News that evening.



The Presbytery of Philadelphia celebrated the 25th Anniversary of Ordination of Revs. Ruth Santana-Grace and Kevin Porter at their November meeting. Pictured here are those who came to support "Rev Kev" from First Church and Mount Airy. (Not pictured: Randy Rosensteel)

## FPCG Acts & Engages

First Church's "Act & Engage" got off to an excellent start with two programs on the book *Just Mercy* led by Dr. Tonya Thames-Taylor of West Chester University. Dr. Thames-Taylor brought new insight into the criminal justice system, including the for-profit prison network being Big Business, the practice of "othering," and scriptural support from the story of David and Goliath and Micah 6:8.



Our second program is a Panel Discussion with VA representative Peter Yeomans, Program Director of the Patient PTSD Clinic, Jim Abram, Founding Director of Pointman Soldiers' Heart Ministries, and our own Duane Horne. Its focus was on veterans, particularly those suffering from PTSD.



We will take the month of December off, and our final program on this topic will be on Sunday, January 22, 2020, where we plan to put it all together. It will be another Panel Discussion with participants who are active in the justice system in various capacities, including Daniel Conner. We hope this journey into how we might be better followers of Jesus around caring for prisoners is one that enlightens and convicts our church community. Please place the January date on your calendar and plan to join us!

## In Other News!

### November 23<sup>rd</sup> Men's Breakfast

25 men of FPCG gathered for a wonderful breakfast prepared by Dani Howard on Saturday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>. They listened to guest speaker and member Anthony Ohemeng, husband to Annie Kotto. Anthony is the highest ranking UN official in the west African nation of Mauritania. He spoke of his work ensuring various UN agency policies are administered as well as reflect the UN's fundamental values of inclusion and equality. Thank you Anthony for educating us about your work in a country that most of us knew very little about prior to your sharing. For those unable to attend, please keep an eye out in the spring for another morning gathering of our men over breakfast and conversation.



*5th @ 5:00 Sunday*

This Month's Theme: *Celebration of the Incarnation*

December 29th | 5:00PM | *In the Sanctuary*

Join our alternative worship services on every 5th Sunday of the year! Enjoy contemporary music, creative aspects, and a delicious meal in fellowship afterward. Come out and enrich your life!

Christmas dinner following with turkey by CDFC and potluck sides and desserts!

**12.21.2019**

**11:00 A.M.**  
*Until*  
**2:00 P.M.**

**IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!**

**FPCG's Annual Christmas Festival**

**JOIN US FOR A DAY OF CRAFTS, GINGERBREAD BUILDING, NATIVITY WITH LIVE ANIMALS, CARD MAKING, ORNAMENT DECORATING, CHRISTMAS PLAY, PICTURES WITH SANTA, COMPLIMENTARY LUNCH, AND MORE!**

**Free will offering!**

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