



The November 2021 Voice

How blessed is the man
who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water
Which yields its fruit in its season.
And its leaf does not wither;
And in whatever he does, he prospers.
Psalm 1:1-3

Thankful and Blessed

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; for indeed our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:28-29)

We have arrived at that time of the year in which the weather is turning a little chillier and the leaves are changing their colors. Perhaps we snuggle on the couch in blankets and sip hot home-made soup or a pumpkin spice latte. No matter what we have going on, we can't help but to be thankful in the season of Thanksgiving.

Sometimes though it is hard to be thankful especially when we are going through tough circumstances. Members of our church family have had to quarantine over the past few weeks due to COVID exposure. We have had members lose loved ones to COVID too. Others of us are struggling with depression as the nights get longer and the days seem drearier. Is it even possible that we can be thankful even in the midst of the chaos that is swirling around us?

Yes, I believe it is possible. It is not always easy but it is possible. Being thankful does not mean we downplay or willfully ignore the challenges we face. Rather, being thankful and showing our gratitude helps to place our focus on what God has done, continues to do and will do for us.

It's not always easy to see where God is at work in the mundane everyday of life. I have found a particularly spiritual practice called The Daily Examen to be very helpful though. The Daily Examen as a spiritual discipline is attributed to St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) who founded the Society of Jesus which is also known as the Catholic order of Jesuits. The Examen is a brief spiritual exercise that is done at the end of the day in which you prayerfully examine your entire day. You reflect upon the moments when you felt close to God and the moments when you felt far away from God.

There are many different versions of the Daily Examen which gives us the opportunity to make it our own. This is a version of the five-step Daily Examen that St. Ignatius practiced:

1. Give thanks.
2. Ask God for light. Pray to look at your day with God's eyes, and not merely your own.
3. Review your day. When to you feel the closest to God? When did you feel distant from God?
4. Face your shortcomings. What would do differently if given the chance?
5. Look toward tomorrow. Where do you need God in the day to come?

The Daily Examen can take anywhere from 5 minutes to 20 minutes a day. This discipline helps us to put the day into perspective. Often we will find that even the bad days will contain hints of God's love and presence in them, and it is only in looking back that we can see God.

I invite you to join me in this spiritual discipline for this season or if you prefer to engage in some other spiritual disciple that helps you draw closer to God. "Coming Back Together" both physically and spiritually is transformative for us, for our ministry as the congregation of First Church, and for the future of our church.

Mark and I give God thanks for all of you! You are our First Church family and we are so appreciative for your love and grace shown to us. I look forward to "Coming Back Together" with you and reconnecting with you. If you have not been to First Church in a while I extend a heartfelt invitation for you to come back to see us. You are valued and you are missed when you are not here.

Mark and I wish all of you a very blessed Thanksgiving! May your cup overflow with God's goodness and love!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Kelley



The children's Sunday School classes will be building a snowman from recycled material for the *Salvation Army's Snowman Trail Contest* that will be held at the *Washington Crown Center* during the month of December. You can help out by bringing in white shredded paper that will be used for the snowman's body. Shredded paper will be collected starting November 1st through the 21st and can be placed in the bin on the table outside of the Sanctuary near the elevator. Thank you for your help and be sure to stop out and vote for the kids' snowman creation at the mall!

**Do You Want
to Build
a Snowman?**





We Care Street Outreach Ministry

Many thanks to the crew who helped make the meals for *We Care Street Outreach*! We made 25 meals that included a hoagie, lettuce & tomato, Italian dressing, a fruit cup, macaroni salad, and a homemade brownie. The folks at *We Care* were very grateful for our support!

They had several new people come and ran out of meals. They gave gift cards to *McDonald's* to the few who didn't receive a meal. Please keep *We Care* in your thoughts and prayers!

Todd Aloia, MissionsNOW Chair

What's Going on in the Youth Sunday School?

The class varies between 5 to 6 kids. We are continuing with our *Random Acts of Kindness Board* each week. We are using prayer cards for prayer requests and showing of thanks. It is helping the kids to be more involved in our class prayers.

We have completed 6 of 10 blankets for the *Salvation Army Christmas Gifts*. In September and October, we sent cards each month to 28 members of our church family. Most of our class will be participating in *Rise Against Hunger* and I've recruited one and possibly 2 other youth groups for this project. The kids are also inviting their friends to help. Four of our youth families will be ringing the bells for the *Salvation Army* on November 20.

Our Bible Study continues to be on *Choices and Consequences*. Stories from the *Old Testament* are being used. This has been really timely with all the *Tik Tok* controversy and the need to make God a part of our decision-making. This study should end about the time the *Advent* study begins.



Deepen Your Faith! *Amplify* is the *United Methodist Publishing House's* multimedia platform that delivers high quality, searchable content with an emphasis on *Wesleyan* perspectives for church-wide, group, or individual use on any device at any time. You can access Bible studies and tools to help you deepen your faith anytime, anywhere. ***There is also a ton of content for children that will be attractive for our young families.*** Through the purchase of our church-wide *Advent* study, we have free access as a congregation to Amplify from now until January 1. Amplify can be accessed at: <https://my.amplifymedia.com/amplify> . You will be asked to set up an personal account using the congregational code GWXNSC .

The MHR Adult Sunday School Class

The *MHR Adult Sunday School Class* started a new study on October 24th with David Jeremiah, *Everything You Need: Walking the Journey of Faith with the Promises of God*. Dr. David Jeremiah draws on 2 Peter 1:3-11 to show how there is help at our fingertips to overcome the pressures of the world. God has given us every tool we need - virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love - to help us soar above present circumstances and make the most of every opportunity. We can live in confidence because of His precious promises! This study will run up to the *Advent* season, and all are welcome to join us in the *Mary Hazlett Room*. Class facilitators: Donna and Gary Rodvelt

Spiritual
Education

Operation Christmas Child

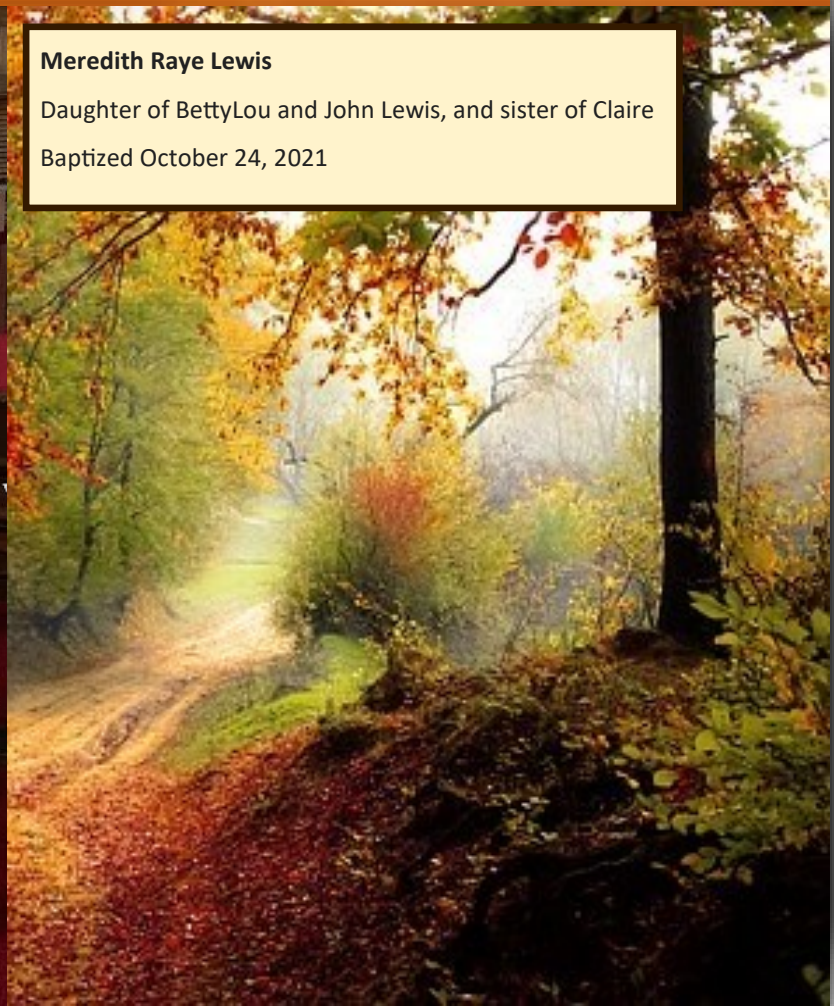
Please consider packing a box for *Operation Christmas Child*. We will collect boxes (can be left on the altar rail in the Sanctuary) and boxes will be due by **Sunday, November 14**. We will bless and pray over the boxes during worship on November 14. There is a donation of \$9 per box. Please place your donation in an envelope and tape it on the outside of your box(es). Shoeboxes are not provided so you will need to provide your own. Checks can be made out to *First UMC* with *Operation Christmas Child* in the memo line. You can also make a donation online and print out a label that will allow you to track your box. More information about *Operation Christmas Child* can be found at <https://www.samaritanspurse.org/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/> .



Meredith Raye Lewis

Daughter of BettyLou and John Lewis, and sister of Claire

Baptized October 24, 2021



Love in a Bag



The number of bags being filled at *Love in a Bag* is increasing with the addition of another school and many programs returning to more normal numbers and routines. When all schools are in session we are filling 525 bags for food insufficient children. We have a loyal crew of about 13 *First Church* members who meet weekly to assist the *Salvation Army* in this outreach. Looking for a little easy exercise? Join us on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. at the *Salvation Army*.



A *Blessing of the Animals Service* will be held on Sunday, November 7, at 4 p.m. in the Chapel. All pets are welcome, and all animals should be well behaved. We ask that dogs be kept on leashes and that cats be in carriers. *The Blessing of the Animals* will be a brief service with a verbal blessing being given to each pet. If your pet is unable to attend, we encourage you to bring a picture that will be placed on the altar table. Please let Pastor Kelley know if you would want to ar-

Washington City Mission

The *Washington City Mission* is in need of items for their *Bag of Love* program for *Thanksgiving*. Each bag is filled with the contents of a *Thanksgiving* meal and will be used to feed over 600 people in the community. They are requesting the following items: instant mashed potatoes, canned yams, canned green beans, instant stuffing mix, turkey gravy mix, canned corn, and canned cranberry sauce. Items can be placed in the bins in the entry way of the church off of the parking lot and are **due by Sunday, November 7**. Thank you for your continued commitment to helping to feed the hungry of our community.

Women's Fellowship Group

Need a little break before the *Thanksgiving* rush?

All the women of *First Church* are invited to *Tower Restaurant* for breakfast on Thursday, November 18, at 9:30 for a morning of food and fellowship.

If you haven't joined us before, we hope you will.

Thank You!

Thank you for all of the "Pastor Appreciation" gifts, cards and well wishes we have received over these past few weeks! We are so grateful for your generosity and kindness shown to us. We are so appreciative of all of you who make *First Church* truly a very special place!

Love,
Pastor Kelley and Mark



Ringing the Bells for the Salvation Army
Saturday, November 20
9 to 5 p.m.

- 9 a.m. The Eates/Horne Family 412-217-0662
10 a.m. The Clawson Family 412-977-6833
11 a.m. The Wigfield Family 724-433-9635
12 noon The Voytek Family 724-344-3820
1 p.m. Shirley, Morgan, & Joey Henderson 412-217-0397
2 p.m. Amy and Madelyn Lolley 724-986-0083
3 p.m. Sue Conrady 724-747-3440
4 p.m. Robert Foflygen 724-222-8314





Worship

We have been so blessed to have the opportunity to come back together in person for worship! We have been blessed to have several visitors join us for worship over the past few weeks. We hope that if you have not had the opportunity that you will join us for worship soon! If case you missed any of our worship services over the past few weeks, the links are included below along with the in person worship attendance:

October 3 (in person 49) <https://fb.watch/8TSAzQkZ6U/>

October 10 (in person 39) <https://fb.watch/8TSxgybciu/>

October 17 (in person 40) <https://fb.watch/8TSqKketto/>

October 24 (in person 54) <https://fb.watch/8TStoDA2fp/>

Combined Worship Service

We are blessed to be having a combined worship service with *John Wesley UMC* on **Sunday, November 21** at 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary. The Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) had identified 'dismantling racism' as a key area of focus in the upcoming year with the goal of having a combined worship service with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Pastor Debra and Pastor Kelley are looking forward to having our congregations to come together in worship and fellowship!

Education News

We are so blessed being able to continue our Sunday School classes. We are strongly recommending the children and volunteers begin wearing masks again. We have had several families quarantined due to exposure. Hopefully, this extra precaution will help us be able to keep having Sunday School classes

The children have been learning about notes and sounds in music with Miss Elaine. They are learning to play the bells and singing. They will be singing during the worship service on November 14th.

Hard to believe it will soon be *Advent*. The 3 younger classes will be participating in the church wide *Advent* study based on the Grinch story starting November 28th.

We will be making a snow man using shredded paper and other recyclables that will be displayed in the *Washington Crown Center* to raise money for *Salvation Army* programs. Please make sure to go and vote for our snowman.

After polling our parents of the Pre-K thru 6th kids, we are planning a *Kid's Night Out* on December 10th from 6 to 8:30 p.m. so mom and dad can enjoy a night out by themselves. We will enjoy the *Grinch Movie* with food and games and do a practice for our Grinch Skit for Sunday the 19th. Watch for sign-up sheets.

The Children's pageant will be presented during the worship service on December 19th. You will not want to miss it. The kids will help the Grinch grow a bigger heart through the nativity story after he steals all of our Nativity costumes.

VBS exciting news. The theme for this year is *Food Truck Party*. There is a workshop in March in Pittsburgh that by attending we can take advantage of a 25% discount for that day on our order.

The OMG youth group (3rd-5th grade) are selling *Amish* made pies to raise funds for their projects for the *City Mission*. There are order forms and information on the table outside the Sanctuary. Orders are due this Sunday, October 31st.

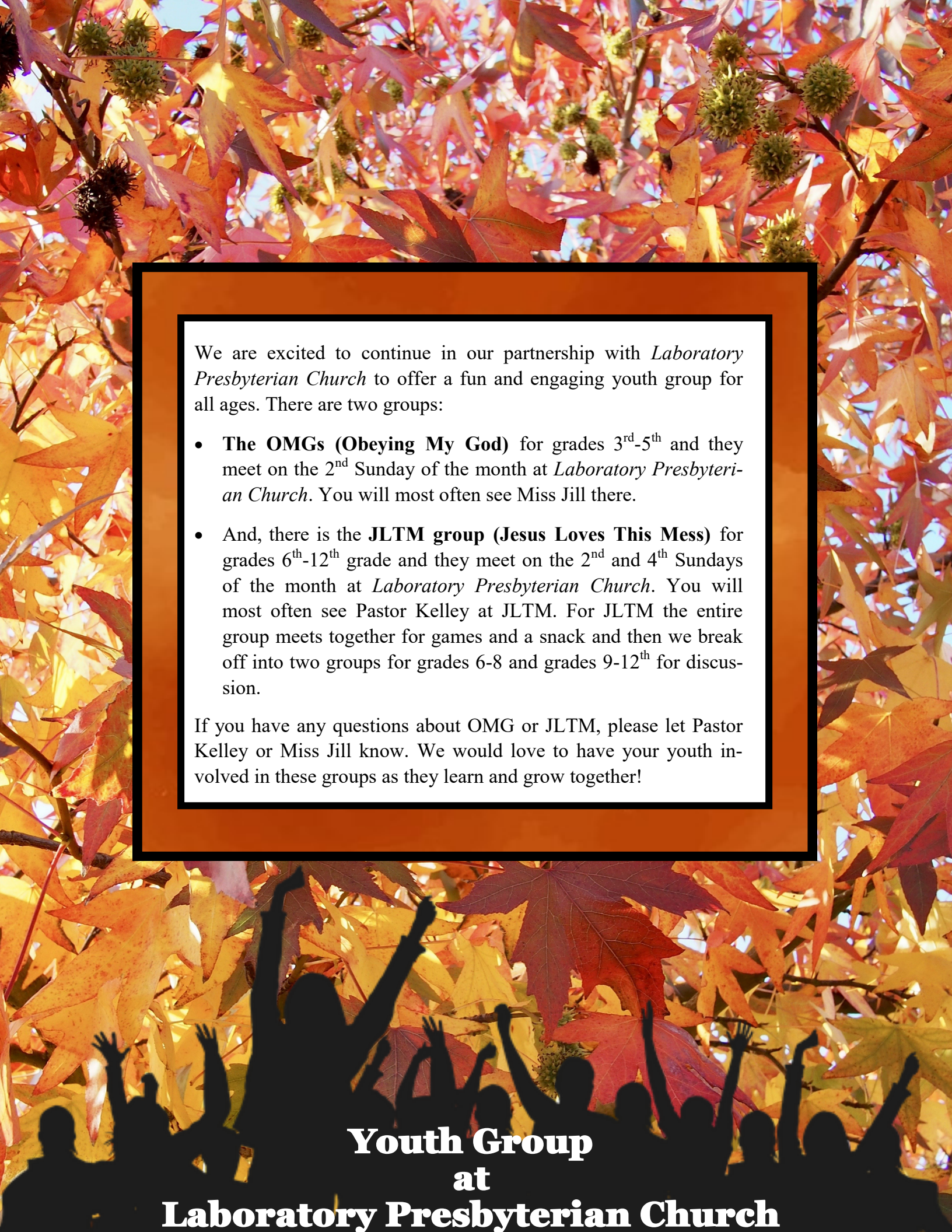
There is also an ongoing food collection to help the community out during the holiday season.

Our Children are learning to reach out and help others around us. Thank you for your help and support.

We still need volunteers to staff the nursery and fill in for the regular teachers. Please contact Amy Lolley if you can help in the nursery. Our children are adorable and are enjoying the nursery make over. This is such a valuable program that encourages families with younger children to attend the worship service. Also, volunteers to do the *Children's Moment* during the worship service are also welcome.

The children's Sunday School classes **will not** be held on Sunday, December 26th. We will be making a decision soon about January 2nd so please keep on an eye out for an announcement.

Our next Christian Education meeting will be January 17, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.



We are excited to continue in our partnership with *Laboratory Presbyterian Church* to offer a fun and engaging youth group for all ages. There are two groups:

- **The OMGs (Obeying My God)** for grades 3rd-5th and they meet on the 2nd Sunday of the month at *Laboratory Presbyterian Church*. You will most often see Miss Jill there.
- And, there is the **JLTM group (Jesus Loves This Mess)** for grades 6th-12th grade and they meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month at *Laboratory Presbyterian Church*. You will most often see Pastor Kelley at JLTM. For JLTM the entire group meets together for games and a snack and then we break off into two groups for grades 6-8 and grades 9-12th for discussion.

If you have any questions about OMG or JLTM, please let Pastor Kelley or Miss Jill know. We would love to have your youth involved in these groups as they learn and grow together!




**Youth Group
at
Laboratory Presbyterian Church**



Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi has appointed Rev. Paul Ritchey, who currently serves as the Washington District Superintendent, to serve as the Greensburg District Superintendent. Greensburg DS Pat Nelson, who has served in the post since 2014, will begin serving as pastor of the Holiday Park UMC, effective Jan. 1, 2022. A new superintendent will be named for the Washington District. Paul wishes to thank you all for the warm and gracious welcome he and he wife Suzanne has received from the Washington District since their appointment here in July 2020.

Free Thanksgiving Dinner

Jefferson Avenue United Methodist Church is once again having a free Thanksgiving dinner available for takeout only. They are in need of turkeys, large boxes of stuffing mix, large boxes of instant mashed potatoes, turkey gravy mix, large cans of green beans, and pumpkin pies. They will be feeding as many people as they can 11 to 1p.m. on *Thanksgiving Day*. They are also asking for a “few” volunteers. Please let Pastor Kelley know if you can help out with any of these needs and she can put you in touch with Pam from *Jefferson Avenue UMC*.



**The next 2 pages of this
November Voice
is filled with**

“All Things Christmas”

**Get ready, get excited, and
mark your calendars!
Advent is upon us. Let’s
celebrate!**

**These articles will be
placed again in the Decem-
ber Voice and make many
appearances in the Sunday
bulletin.**



Christmas Eve Worship

We hope your family can join us this year as we come back together to celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ!

Family Service, 5 p.m.

Concert of Christmas Music, 7 p.m.

Traditional Worship, 7:30 p.m.

Decorating the Church for Advent

Advent is just right around the corner with the 1st Sunday in *Advent* on November 28. In preparation for *Advent*, we will be decorating and adorning the church on **Sunday, November 21**, following worship. Pizza will be provided. As of now, the *Steelers* are scheduled to play at 8:20 p.m. that day so we will have plenty of time for decorating. Please come and be a part of this awesome fellowship event!

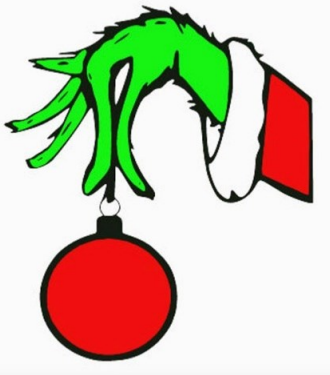
Advent Wreath Candle Lighters/Readers Needed!

During the *Advent* season we light the *Advent* candles as a visual reminder of the light of Christ expanding as we draw closer to *Christmas*. Each week we light the candles of peace, hope, love and joy and have a brief reading to draw our focus on the season. If you are interested in lighting the *Advent* wreath and doing a reading, please let Pastor Kelley know. *Advent* begins Sunday, November 28. Thank you!

Community Circle Food Pantry Holiday Collection

Throughout the past 38 years, the *Community Circle Food Pantry* has worked hard to provide all of their regular client's orders with the holiday fixings. They are asking for holiday non-perishable food items: gravy, canned yams, cake mix & icing, boxed mashed potatoes, Jell-O or pudding mix, canned vegetable, pie filling, canned pumpkin, corn bread mix, pie crust, snack cakes, cranberries, stuffing mix and condensed/evaporated milk. We will begin collecting these items starting on Sunday, November 14 **until Wednesday, December 8th**. Items can be placed in the bins where we are currently collecting for *Washington City Mission*.





A "Grinchy" Kid's Night Out

The Christian Education Committee is hosting a *Kid's Night Out* on Friday, December 10, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. This will be a fun filled night for the kids while mom and dad enjoy a night out by themselves! The night will include a movie, snack, games, and a craft. Registration is required ahead of time so we can properly plan. Jill Motzer (see with questions) will have a sign-up table in the next few weeks.



This *Advent season* we will be offering a church-wide study and sermon series exploring the faith themes in the *Christmas* classic, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*

We will use this beloved *Christmas* classic as a lens through which to understand the redemption and salvation offered to us in Christ, and how the birth of God's son brings peace, hope, love, and joy. Whether we identify with the Grinch, sympathize with him, or feel aversion to his character, we can learn from his journey as he comes to understand that *Christmas* is more than what he thought.

Children's Christmas Pageant

The *Children's Christmas Pageant* will be held on Sunday, December 19. In keeping with our *Advent* theme, the pageant will also have a Grinch theme as the Grinch tries to keep the kids from having their *Christmas Pageant*. The children will also be performing a piece with bells that they have been working on with Miss Elaine.



December 26 Sunday Worship

Our worship service on Sunday, December 26, which is the first Sunday of *Christmas* will be a little more casual than usual. You are invited to wear your "Grinch" themed pajamas, sweaters or sweatshirts! Come decked out in your finest Grinchwear of the season!

Daylight Savings Time Ends November 7th

Fall Back!

—One Hour



November Calendar

Every Sunday:

- 9:30 a.m. Music with Miss Elaine, Pre-K through 6th graders, then Sunday School begins at 10 a.m.
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School for 7th thru 12 grades and Adults
- 11:00 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary, Nursery Available

Every Wednesday:

- 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Every Tuesday:

- 10 a.m. *Love in a Bag* packing at *Salvation Army*. Enter through the lower doors off the parking lot.

Every Thursday:

- 7 p.m. *Zoom* Prayer Gathering

3 7 p.m. MissionsNOW Committee, Mary Hazlett Room

7 4 p.m. Blessing of the Animals

14 Operation Christmas Child Boxes Due

5:30 p.m. 3rd to 5th grade youth group,
Laboratory Presbyterian Church

5:30 p.m. 6th to 12 grade youth group,
Laboratory Presbyterian Church

16 7 p.m. Finance Committee *Zoom* meeting

18 9:30 a.m. Women's Fellowship Group, *Tower Restaurant*

20 *Salvation Army* Bell Ringing, Giant Eagle, Strabane Square

21 John Wesley and First Church Combined Worship Service

Shredded paper for Youth Snowman Project Due

Decorating the Church for Advent following worship

28 5:30 p.m. 6th to 12th grade youth group, *Laboratory Presbyterian Church*



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

The People of the United Methodist Church

First United Methodist Church

29 North College Street

Washington, PA 15301

724-222-2520



*“Let them give thanks to the Lord for His lovingkindness,
and for His wonders to the sons of men! Let them also offer
sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of His works with joyful
singing.” (Psalm 107:21,22)*

Pastor Kelley Schanely

Cell Phone #: (724) 322-8929

pastorkell@firstchurchwashington.org



First United Methodist Church,
Washington, PA