



December 2022

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A Message from Pastor Laura

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.
 - Luke 2:11-12



Two of the best Christmas movies feature angels: *It's a Wonderful Life* and *The Bishop's Wife*. The angels appear as two regular human beings who teach the meaning of Christmas to those who've gone astray. They come as messengers of God. This is appropriate because the root for angel comes from the Greek word, *angelos*. *Angelos* means, "messenger." Angels are those who bring divine words.

The Advent and Christmas seasons are those in which the angels take strong supporting roles in our Christian story. We will read in the weeks to come of the angel Gabriel. Gabriel appears first to Zechariah, declaring, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God." (Luke 1:19) He then appears to Mary, inviting her to become mother to the Son of God. The whole heavenly host later appears to the shepherds with, 'tidings of great joy.'

What meaning do these heavenly messengers have for us today? For some, angels hold great significance. Some people purport to have seen angels, and testify to their presence among us. Other Christians think of angels in the same category as Frosty the Snowman: fiction. Still others believe angels are a literary device used by the Gospel authors to support their message. What do you think, and what impact does this have on your faith?

The Adult Sunday School class will explore the theme of the Christmas Angels on Sunday's from November 27 - December 18 during the 9:00 a.m. class in the library. We will be using the Rev. Susan Robb's video series, *The Angels of Christmas: Hearing God's Voice in Advent*, to guide us in the journey of hearing God's message for us at Christmas. I hope you'll join us as we make connections between what God did 2,000 years ago and what God is calling us to through the gift of Jesus today!

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Laura

Music Notes

By Shelby Gracey

During this Advent and Christmas season, we'll have a variety of special music in our morning worship services. Our Chancel Choir, Campanile Bells, and GPM are working hard on beautiful Advent and Christmas music. Also be sure to join us for our Christmas Eve service on December 24 at 7:00 p.m., which will include scriptures, carols, candlelight, and many musical selections throughout the service. It's such a blessing to be able to celebrate the coming of the Christ Child through beautiful, seasonal music!

There are so many wonderful and cherished Christmas carols, it's

hard to highlight just one. However, the First Noel has a rather interesting background that I'd like to share. "Very little is known about its origin, but it's believed to have had its rise in France during the fifteenth century. *Noel* is a French word originating from Latin meaning "birthday." The song is thought to have been brought across the channel to England before 1823 by the wandering troubadours. The carol under the English form, "Nowell," became a great favorite for Christmas Eve, especially in the west of England. This was when the entire village gathered for singing and celebrating the bringing in of the Yule log. At this time,

carols were thought of as popular religious songs meant to be sung outside the church rather than within.

"The First Noel" portrays in vivid narrative style the story of the birth of Christ. All six stanzas are needed to complete the entire event when the hymn is sung. The sixth stanza urges us to join together to sing praises to God for the marvels of His creation and for the salvation provided through Christ's shed blood. The repetition of the joyous "noel" in the refrain is equivalent to our singing out "happy birthday" to someone."

The first noel, the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay

In fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

*They looked up and saw a star shining in the East beyond them far
And to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night*

*And by the light of that same star Three Wise men came from country far
To seek for a King was their intent and to follow the star wherever it went.*

*This star drew nigh to the northwest, O'er Bethlehem it took it rest,
And there it did both stop and stay right over the place where Jesus lay.*

*Then entered in those wise men three, full reverently upon their knee,
And offered there in his presence their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.*

*Then let us all with one accord sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
That hath made heaven and earth of naught, and with his blood mankind
hath bought*

Refrain:

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel!

("Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions," Kenneth W. Osbeck, Kregel Publications, 2002, p. 360.)



Notes from Christian Education

By Taylor Strang

It is officially the time of year that I will be signing all of my emails with “warmest regards” to battle the cold and send my warmth to those around me.

Advent is upon us and so is the story of the birth of Jesus Christ. It is a story that most of us can tell over and over from memory, yet we sit and listen with open ears every year. From the journey itself, to the reasoning of the journey, to who greeted the family, keep your ears open and listen to the miracles of the season.

Nursery Volunteers Needed

Sunday during Worship Service

We are looking for some volunteers to help us in the nursery during worship on Sundays. If you are interested, please contact Taylor at: sunsethillsce@gmail.com.



We had our first Cookies & Cocoa fellowship on November 27th with our ugly sweater contest. Congratulations to Dick Fleming, our grand prize winner and recipient of the 2022 trophy. (See picture below for proof that the contest was not rigged, he won fair and square!) We hope to see you after worship in December for some more Christmas fun and fellowship!



Cookies & Cocoa Fellowship

After worship – Sunday’s during Advent

Findley Hall



December 4th - Cookie Decorating: Bring your artistic abilities and your sweet tooth to decorate your own cookie during fellowship hour.

December 11th - Christmas Karaoke: Singing should not be contained to the choir here at SHUP. Come join us to sing your favorite Christmas songs.



December 18th - Ornament Making: Send our friends of shup and members that need to stay home a gift this holiday season by decorating an ornament for them.

Stewardship

By Jody Colby

Stewardship in Oxford languages is the job of supervising **or taking care of something, such as an organization or property.**

Theologically, stewardship is the belief that humans are responsible for the world and should take care and look after it. Believers in stewardship are usually people who believe in one God who created the universe and all that is within it, also believing that they must take care of creation and look after it.

According to the *Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church*, “giving has always been a mark of commitment and discipleship. The ways in which a believer uses God’s gifts of material goods, personal abilities, and time should reflect a faithful response to God’s self-giving in Jesus Christ and Christ’s call to minister to and share with others in the world. Tithing is a primary expression of the Christian discipline of stewardship.”

Let me start at the end...tithing. When I was a young adult, I rather dreaded the fall stewardship campaign because tithe preaching would come up. I didn't like it. It made me feel small and sinful. Mostly because I couldn't tithe. We were lucky to pay the mortgage when interest rates were 8.5 %. I now understand there is a lot more to it than money. In essence when you add in material giving, ability giving, and time giving, we all give more than 10%.

Look around you. This place, this organization, this devotion is the

before you, time and talents, abilities, and faithfulness because you are stewards.

For example: The Young Adults, (God bless them) many who grew up in this church, wanted to care for this place, so they offered to redecorate Findley Hall. After all some of them were nurtured in the “big room”. They sought your support. They were so successful, and you were so giving, they were able to buy new chairs which will be coming soon. Time, talents, abilities, and faithfulness. That's tithing!

Another example: When the roof over the apses suddenly started to leak because God's creatures were digging into the roofing, cool heads and true grit and your money prevailed. I especially liked the creativity of our Pastor to jerry-rig a funnel directing the roof water into the bucket. That's tithing!

Oh, and I must mention the Monday Morning Marvels, who, some daily and others weekly, prepare the

church and grounds for use. For many this is a second home.

When we asked you to write letters to the legislature to press for licensing immigrants, you cared.

When we asked for coats for the needy, for baby clothes for immigrants, for walking the neighborhood to clean up litter, for making blankets for Ukraine you cared.

For donating coats, for labor at Garfield Farm, for service to our neighborhood, you cared.

For sending money to flood, fire, and hurricane devastated areas, you cared.

When we ask you to pledge whatever you can so we can keep our staff, so we can give away 10 % to our communities and individuals in need, you care.

Yes, we tithe. We are stewards in every sense of the word, together and separately, with our time, our talents, our abilities, and our faithfulness. And we are so grateful. Thank you!

Deacon Cookie Sale

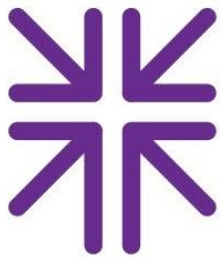
Saturday, December 3rd

10 am – Noon

Findley Hall



Mission



CHRISTMAS JOY SPECIAL OFFERINGS

Through Dec. 18th

CHURCH LEADERS—PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



When we give to the Christmas Joy Offering, we share our love with the leaders of our Church — past, present and future — who point us to God.

50%

of your gift makes it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

50%

of your gift assists current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs.

Ways to Give

- ✠ Through your congregation - use one of the special envelopes in the pews on Sunday, mail in a check (be sure to write Christmas Joy on the memo line) or use the www.tithe.ly app.
- ✠ By credit card online at [Presbyterian Special Offerings \(pcusa.org\)](http://PresbyterianSpecialOfferings.org).
- ✠ Text CHRISTMASJOY to 91999.

Songs of the Season:

A Devotional Journey Through the Hymns of Christmas

Pastor Laura has written a daily devotional for the season of Advent. Copies are available in the narthex or you can download your copy by visiting our website at: [Christmas at SHUP | Mysite \(shupchurch.org\)](http://Christmas at SHUP | Mysite (shupchurch.org)).



Finance Update

Giving Statements

Members and regular givers should have received a Statement of Giving through October 21, 2022. Please look over your statement for potential discrepancies between your records and those of the church so that they can be resolved before year end. All donors will receive an End of Year Statement in January 2023 to assist in filing your 2022 income taxes.

Donations

All donations for 2022 must be received in the church office no

later than December 31, 2022 for them to appear on your 2022 Statement of Giving. It is best to mark on the check the year in which you would like your donation to be counted. If there is no designation, donations will be recorded in the year in which they are received.

Pledge Cards

If you have not already done so, please remember to turn in your 2023 pledge card so that the SHUP 2023 budget can be finalized. Cards can be mailed in or placed in the offering tray on Sunday.

Per Capita

2023 Per Capita has been assessed at \$35.70 per member. Please consider making a separate donation to cover the cost of each church member in your family. Donations that are specifically designated for Per Capita will prevent a reduction in the general budget.

If you have any questions about your finances pertaining to the church, please feel free to contact Beth at (412)561-6261 or at shupfinance@gmail.com.



**Tinsel,
Ribbon and Bows...
Oh My!**

Need to Untwine?

Join Peanut Squares for some

Social Square Dancing

Every Tuesday 7 – 9:30 PM

EVERYONE WELCOME

Sunset Hills U.P. Church
900 Country Club Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

PARTNER NOT REQUIRED

Caller: Shawn Brown

\$5 admission (Student & Family rates)

Contact: Beth: 412-680-4837 or Nick: 412-667-0929

Thank You

Dear SHUP Family,

Happy Holidays from Boston! I have wanted to thank you all for the many ways that you have supported me over the past few years. After losing Dick and needing to make a major life change, you were there for me with phone calls, cards, and prayers. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we were not able to hold a proper memorial service before I had to move away. I would like to thank Pastor Laura and the SHUP staff for helping me hold the memorial service at a later date. Also, thank you to the members who helped me plan the reception and to those of you who were able to join me and my family to celebrate and remember Dick. It was so nice to see everyone again after such a long absence.

I look forward to being able to visit again in the spring. Until then, I will continue to pray and be grateful for all of you, my SHUP family.

Blessings to you for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Phyllis Moore



Dear SHUP Church Family,

There is no way to adequately thank you for the love and support you shared with us while Ginny was hospitalized and recovering at home. Your prayers, calls, cards, flowers and visits were greatly appreciated.

Your expressions of sympathy when Ray's sister passed away were so helpful and welcome. Again, our most sincere thanks.

Ray & Ginny Bowman

Dear SHUP Family,

John and I are so grateful for all the prayers and concern our church family sent our way during John's recent illness. Our prayers were answered, John's surgery was a success, and he is feeling stronger every day.

We are especially thankful for Pastor Laura. Her prayers and calming presence made it easier to face the challenge. A heartfelt thank you to you, Laura.

Blessings and Love,

Pat Ellis



December Information

Adult Sunday School

9:00 am - Library

Pastor Laura will lead the class on an Advent study by Susan Robb entitled *Angels of Christmas*.

There will be no class on December 25th or January 1st.

Sunday Worship

10:15 am

If you are not able to join us in person, a video of the service will be posted to our YouTube channel on the Monday after the service:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeEpiQYSD_9My9tb5GEhVRA

You can get a copy of the bulletin by clicking on the link on the homepage of our website www.shupchurch.org.

Fellowship Hour

11:15 am - Findley Hall

Everyone is invited to join us for fellowship in Findley Hall for Cookies & Coca during the season of Advent.

December 4th – Cookie Decorating

December 11th – Christmas Karaoke

December 18th – Ornament Making

Jesus & Me (JAM)

Monday's – 11:30 am

Taylor will hold JAM for the pre-school in room 113 on December 5th and 11th.

Findley Hall Bible Study

Monday's – 1:00 pm

The Findley Hall Bible Study class will meet on December 5th and then take a break until the new year.

If you would like to learn more about this study, please contact Jody Colby at jody.colby@verizon.net.

Wilson Hall Bible Study

Tuesday's – 1:00 pm

The Wilson Hall Bible Study class will continue to meet in December (*no class 12/20 or 12/27*).

If you would like to learn more about this class, please contact Carole McCullough at seamus1219@hotmail.com.

Campanile Bells

Tuesday's - 6:45 pm

Campanile Bells will continue to meet for rehearsal in the sanctuary.

Peanuts Square Dancing Club

Tuesday's - 7:00 pm

The Peanuts Square Dancing club will continue to meet in Crystal Hall in December. Everyone is welcome, no partner or previous experience is needed. There is a cost of \$5/class.

Chancel Choir Practice

Tuesday's - 7:30 pm

Chancel choir practice will continue to practice on Tuesday evenings in October.

Tai Chi

Wednesday's – 6:30 pm

Gurney Bolster, certified Tai Chi instructor, will hold class on December 7th & 14th. If you are interested in learning more about these classes, please contact Gurney at: gurneybolster@gmail.com.

Office Closed

December 26th & 27th

Nursery School Closed

December 19th – 31st

Pastor Laura Out of Office

Pastor Laura will be away the week of December 26th – 31st





- | | | | |
|----|---------------|----|-------------------|
| 1 | Colby Sembrat | 19 | Dave Kastner |
| 5 | Tim Fako | 21 | Emmie D'Amico |
| 12 | Dick Fleming | 24 | Savannah Bensusan |
| 13 | Anna Daniels | | Carol McCallum |

Prayer List

Dee Borman



Prayer Circle

We ask that every week you take a moment and add these people to your daily prayers.

Week of:	Praying for:
Dec 4 th	The Enterline family; Eric Carol & Nathan Joanne Enterline
Dec 11 th	The Ernst family; Kevin, Sarah, Charles, Sara & Lorryn Jonathan Fako
Dec 18 th	The Farabaugh family; Randy, Darlene, Parker, Bailey & Riley John Fitzwilliam
Dec 25 th	The Flaus family; Greg, Laura & Erin Dick & Dottie Fleming

**SHIM Food Donations
December 2022**

For the month of December, we will be collecting **Paper Products.**

We appreciate your continued support of this ministry.

Sunset Hills Book Club

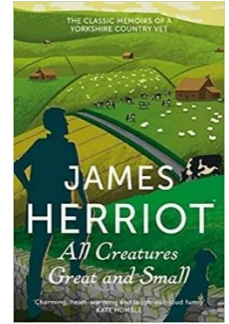
MEETING VIA ZOOM

**December Book of the Month
(Chapters 41-67)**

All Creatures Great & Small

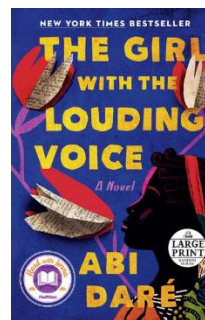
By James Herriot

December 21st - 7:30 pm



For over forty years, generations of readers have thrilled to Herriot's marvelous tales, deep love of life, and extraordinary storytelling abilities. For decades, Herriot roamed the remote, beautiful Yorkshire Dales, treating every patient that came his way from smallest to largest, and observing animals and humans alike with his keen, loving eye.

In All Creatures Great and Small, we meet the young Herriot as he takes up his calling and discovers that the realities of veterinary practice in rural Yorkshire are very different from the sterile setting of veterinary school. Some visits are heart-wrenchingly difficult, such as one to an old man in the village whose very ill dog is his only friend and companion, some are lighthearted and fun, such as Herriot's periodic visits to the overfed and pampered Pekinese Tricki Woo who throws parties and has his own stationery, and yet others are inspirational and enlightening, such as Herriot's recollections of poor farmers who will scrape their meager earnings together to be able to get proper care for their working animals. From seeing to his patients in the depths of winter on the remotest homesteads to dealing with uncooperative owners and critically ill animals, Herriot discovers the wondrous variety and never-ending challenges of veterinary practice as his humor, compassion, and love of the animal world shine forth. (Amazon Book Description)



January 2023

The Girl with the Louding Voice

Voice

by Abi Dare

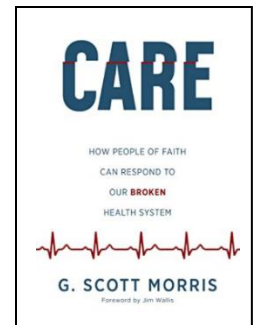
Meeting on Jan. 25th

January 2023

Care

by G. Scott Morris

Meeting on Dec. 21st



Advent Hymns and Carols

*Piano concert with the
Rev. Dr. Jim Morgan*

Free-will offering supports
Garfield Community Farm



Reception to follow

December 8, 2022
6:30 p.m.



Sunset Hills United Presbyterian Church Christmas Festival

Sunday, December 18th
4:00 - 7:00 pm

- Christmas Carol Sing-a-Long
- Visits with St. Nick
- Crafts for the Kids
- Food Trucks



**Sunset Hills United
Presbyterian Church
Longest Night Service
Thursday - December 22nd
7:00 pm**

A service of light amidst
the darkness.



Lessons and Carols
Christmas Eve Service
7:00 pm