

DECEMBER 2021 & JANUARY 2022

THE BEACON

The official newsletter of Brightwood Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

I have a confession: my home is still decorated for thanksgiving. We've had family in and out of town for the past week, and making sure the bathrooms were clean took precedence over putting up the tree.

I keep trying to remind myself that it shouldn't feel like Christmas anyway. Christmas begins Christmas day, not before. We are in the season of Advent. Advent is Holy Waiting. All the decorations, preparations, and shopping trips are fine as long as they are outward signs of something changing *on the inside*.

To prepare your heart for the coming King put these preparations at the top of your season's to-do list:

Whatever your prayer time is, add five minutes. I understand you can pray while you do the dishes, I do that, too. But I need at least five minutes each day where my body is still, and my mind can completely focus on God. Try to use this extra five minutes in silence. Quiet your worries, doubts, prayer concerns. They coincide with the four themes Advent.

- 1) Recognize the need for yourself and the world to be transformed. Look around and see that something drastic needs to change...that we need a savior.
- 2) Prepare the way of the Lord by wiping your heart clean. Tidy up the dark corners of your soul by repenting of the ways you have thought and behaved that hurt God. Guilt and shame aren't pretty decorations to welcome the coming King.
- 3) Rejoice! You should still be in the mindset of turning to a new path in life, but use some time to imagine the beauty and joy that awaits you on the journey. Cookies, wrapping paper, and Christmas trees may give us pleasure, but try to pay attention to the difference between pleasure and joy in Christ.
- 4) Build a sense of anticipation. Think about the night before Christmas when you are five years old and you can barely sleep because you are so excited about what you'll find in the morning. Or remember the anticipation you felt as you awaited the birth of your children. Get excited that someone special is coming into the world!

Consider making special efforts to join us in worship during the advent season. Worshiping together, reflecting on these ideas, watching the advent candles be lit, and being in the presence of others on the same path can greatly increase the joy and meaning of the season.

All the blessings of Advent, the joy of Christmas, and the happiest of New Years to you and your family!

Pastor Jana

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Pastor Jana's Cell

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Website

www.brightwoodchurch.org

Staff

Minister: Rev. Jana Quisenberry

Music Director: Mickey Campbell

Organist: Lisa Powell



Children's Church

Pastor Jana's daughter, Lily with help from her son, James, will be teaching children's church on every Sunday Lily is available. After the children's moment during worship, the kids will go with her to the nursery for a Bible lesson, art, snacks, and songs. Please pray for the success of this ministry.

Disciples Women will gather online for a book club on December 6th at 7pm via zoom. They are studying **The Uninvited: Living Loved When You Feel Less Than, Left Out, and Lonely** by Lysa TerKeurst. The study will be led by Jennifer Allen. Please let Pastor Jana know if you are interested so she can make sure you have the log-in/ call-in information. We are asked to read through Chapter 3 for the December meeting.

Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch for December will be on Thursday, the 16th at 11:30 am. We will return to an old favorite, DeLallo's! (91 Fort Couch Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15241) Please let Pastor Jana know you plan to attend by Tuesday, the 14th.

Christmas Eve Worship will be at 7 pm on December 24th. Can't wait to see you in the Candlelight!

Pull Tabs

We continue to collect pull tabs from aluminum cans for Ronald McDonald House Pittsburgh, a "home away from home" for the families of seriously ill children receiving medical treatment at area hospitals. Please bring them with you to church and leave them in the jar in the narthex, or drop them in the mailbox anytime.

Worship While You Roam

We are still streaming our worship on our Facebook page and YouTube. If you happen to be away for a week, take a little while to worship with us online. It may not be on the same day or in the same place, but God is always worthy of our worship.

Pennies for "Peanut Butter"

Every person can make a difference. We are collecting spare change in a jar in the narthex that will be donated to South Hills Interfaith Movement on November 1st of next year. SHIM serves 2,500 individuals monthly through three food pantries in Bethel Park, Whitehall, and Baldwin. During the pandemic SHIM saw a 41% rise in need, with over 5,000 new individuals attending for the first time. SHIM has 500% purchasing power at the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, meaning financial contributions to the program have five times more impact. Let's see how many people we can feed when we work together!

Advent Devotionals

Advent is a wonderful time to begin a devotional practice. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary provides a daily advent devotional for free online or in print. You can visit <https://www.pts.edu/email> and select "Devotionals" to have them delivered directly to your email. You can also visit https://www.pts.edu/devotional_1 and go directly to each day's devotional beginning November 28th. Or, if you would like to receive it in print, please contact Pastor Jana, and we will get you a printed copy.

Christmas Harmony

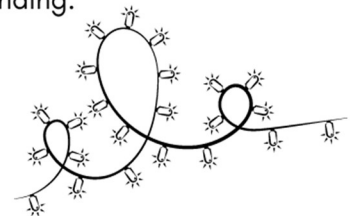
The Harmony Singers will host their Christmas Concert on Friday, Dec. 10 at 7:30 and Sunday, Dec 12 at 3:00 in our sanctuary. It will be a blend of secular and faith-filled holiday music. Please plan to attend to support their wonderful work.

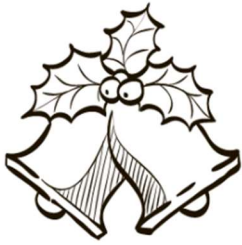
Nativity is Back!

Mark your calendars for December 21st, 22nd, and 23rd, from 6-8! Our nativity will only be two hours this year, but full of the same joy! Sign-up sheets are available in the narthex for actors, cookie bakers, and helpers. Or, you can contact Jan McCuean to sign-up.

Nativity Set-up is December 18th. All hands on deck!

Our Church Christmas Party will be after worship on December 19th. It is a great day to invite a friend to worship, especially kids. It would be helpful to know what dish you plan to bring to share, and how many will be in your party, especially kids. There is a sign up sheet in the narthex, or you can email Pastor Jana if you plan on attending.





Online Giving

We are thrilled to now offer online giving! We understand that not everyone in our congregation would take advantage of such a service. It will enable those visiting our website or joining us for online worship to share in the church's ministry.

The service costs the church nothing except a percentage of those gifts when used. You can download the Givelify App or visit our website to check it out:
brightwoodchurch.org.

There are three categories: local mission (which will go to South Hills Interfaith Ministry), Disciples Mission Fund (which goes to the General Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and tithe/offering, which goes to the general fund of the church to support our ministries and operating budget.

Through Givelify, you can also set up recurring gifts so that you are able to sustain our ministries long-term without the hassle of writing a check each month. It is a joy to give! Why not make it easy, too?

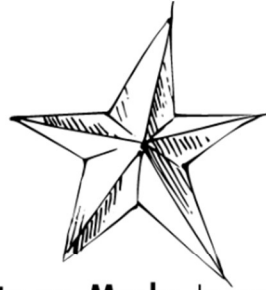
December Birthdays

- 3-Jane Kittel
- 8-Lee Hughes
- 10-Bill Watson
- 12 Nicole Wolowski
- 13-Xander Browel
- Judy Updegrave
- 19- Nicole Jones
- 29-Chelsea Fillippa

December Anniversaries

- 12-the Busbys
- 23-the Lombardis

Please Note: We will not be hiring a new secretary. During this time, the office is closed. Pastor Jana is working from home. She is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is always available for a chat. Please don't hesitate to call her cell phone (412-302-8920) with questions, concerns, or just to talk. She will be going into the office occasionally to check the mail and tidy. Please continue to mail your gifts to Linda Beattie for safety's sake.



A Note on Masks In early August, Allegheny County passed the threshold of COVID-19 cases that triggers the CDC's recommendation to wear masks indoors when in public, whether vaccinated or not. Since then, cases have continued to rise. Pastor Jana continues to mask unless in the pulpit, and encourages you to follow the CDC's guidelines, but our policy has not changed. Masks are voluntary for those who are already vaccinated, and mandatory for those who are not.

More Music in Worship

We have returned more hymns to the worship service. And, of course, all your Christmas favorites. Please come to worship and sing!

January Birthdays

- 1-Don McCuean
- 5-Kathy Busby
- 9-Chuck Nice
- 12-Mickey Campbell
- 16-Lisa Powell
- 19-Rick Browell, Sr.
- 30- Kim Vagni
- 31-Dick Vogele

Dick Vogele has a new address:

Please make a note in your address book: Newhaven Court at Clearview, 100 Newhaven Lane, Butler, PA 16001.

COVID-19 Vaccine Help

Let's hurry and get vaccinated! All Pennsylvanians 5 years old and over are eligible. To find out where to go for a vaccine, call 1-877-724-3258 or visit www.pa.gov/guides/get-vaccinated. Vaccines are typically at no cost to you.

In Our Prayers

Please Pray for the following children of God: Kenny Hebb's parents house was lost in a fire. His mother is in the hospital with smoke inhalation* Pat Watson, recovering from COVID-19* Lisa Powell, recovering from cataract surgery* Lori Beth Watson with complications from a delayed infusion* Chuck Nice, recovering from surgery back at home* Scarlett Runquist, 9 year old with leukemia, treatments appear to be working but are ongoing* Lee Hughes, recovering surgery for a growth on her leg* Dick Mansuetto, Nick Mansuetto's father, continuing chemotherapy* Barb Morgan's Aunt Shirley, with lung cancer* Sue Orrick's cousin, Sandra Reidel, with a malignant tumor in her chest; * Barb Morgan's sister-in-law, Elaine, with stage 4 lung cancer; * Rev. Nikki Mazza-Friedly's mother, Diane Mazza, who has cancer* Rev. Nikki Mazza Friedly, with health concerns* For the families of the 5,262,737 worldwide who have died from COVID-19, including the 808,229 Americans.





Brightwood Christmas Ornament Sale

From Bobby Beattie: After the wonderful response last year, I had to see if we could help Brightwood Christian Church again! This year's ornament will be 'O Holy Night' and will be \$10 each. Once again, \$8 from every ornament sold between now and the end of the year will be donated to the church. Shipping will be available upon request.



Christmas Offering is received on Dec. 12 & 19, 2021. Our gifts support the work of regional ministries this Christmas. Your regional ministry works to:

Connect congregations to each other; Foster faith development
Gather Disciples in camps, conferences, and assemblies; Nurture the development of a new generation of pastors; Assist churches in calling new ministers; Interpret the global mission of the Church; Represent the Church in ecumenical gatherings; Counsel and pray with those who are troubled of spirit; Lead the Church to address racism; Inspire leaders to experiment and create; Witness to the power of God to make things new

A Note on January Activities

January is a wonderful time of new beginnings! We welcome the new year in prayer and joyous expectation of how God might use us in new ways. We don't have activities or meetings planned for January outside of our usual Sunday morning worship and children's church.

Pray for our leadership as we use January to plan for the programming in the coming year. Stay warm and well, as our life together lulls in January and begins to grow healthy and vibrant again as we approach Lent in February.



Brightwood Christian Church
5044 W Library Ave.
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Brightwood Christian Church
A welcoming community of Christians seeking to grow in faith and service.