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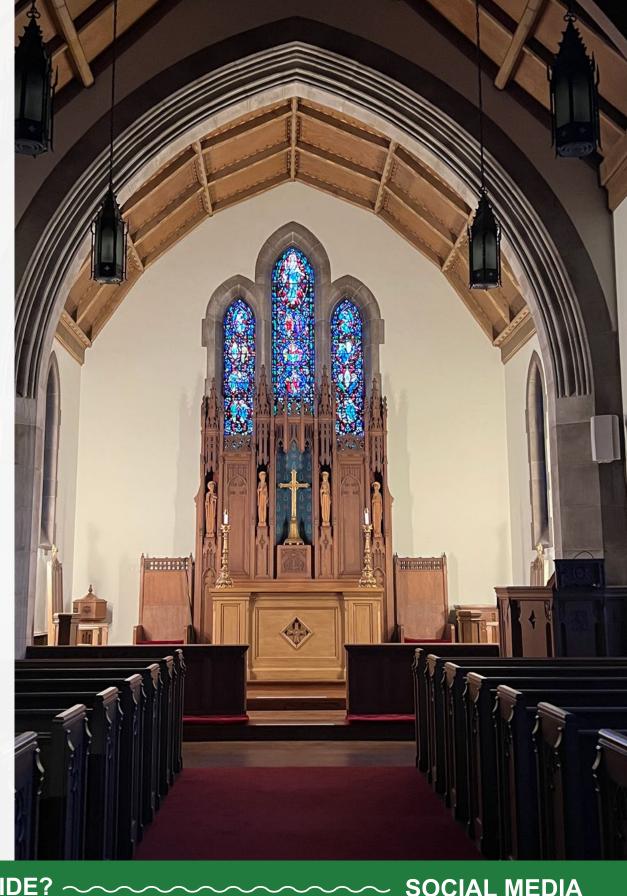
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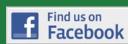
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SOCIAL MEDIA







While our programs have begun anew, we look ahead to Thanksgiving and Advent, and we can almost see a new year on the horizon.

It's also the time of year that we undergo two vital processes for our church. There are so many events and programs that we can see each year, from Vacation Bible School to Confirmation Class - but two foundational events happen a little more quietly.

The first is our nominating process. This process is part of what it means to be Presbyterian. Throughout the fall, our nominating committee takes nominations from the congregation and then identifies and asks individuals from our church to step into leadership roles. Those roles include elders, deacons, future nominating committee members, and high school students whom God is calling into various forms of leadership. After the committee identifies people to serve, the congregation will vote on the new officers. This process gives responsibility for the church's leadership to the congregation itself, not the pastors or the denomination. As fall has ramped up, our nominating committee has worked diligently to fulfill its charge.

The second foundational event is the stewardship campaign. Each year, the congregation hears from the pastors, the stewardship committee, our mission partners, and our members about the importance of stewardship. Like the nominating process, this process places the responsibility for the health of our church in our own hands. The denomination does not fund us - in fact, we support the denomination. The outcomes of our campaign have a direct impact on our ministries each year. This year, for example, as we have several open staff positions, the campaign's outcome will determine whether we fill them at the full-time or part-time level. It allows us to set the amount of support we give to our mission partners, and it will tell us how much money we can set aside for events like the Women's Retreat, Bibles for our third graders, and whether we can provide raises to our incredible staff.

Both the nominating process and the stewardship campaign highlight how we can impact the future of our own congregation. We select our own leaders, and we support our own programs. If we want great leaders, we can identify and empower them. If we want great programs and staff, we can support them.

This freedom is part of what I love about being a Presbyterian. In addition to our rich theology and heritage, we have both the fellowship of a denomination and the freedom to follow where God calls. This year, I encourage you to be part of our congregational meeting on November 12 as we identify new officers. Be an active part of our stewardship campaign as we support the ministry of our church.

Fall is a season of calling. God is calling us to prepare new leaders and to new ministries. Come and see what God has in store for SPC this year!



By Jenny Valente, SPC member

What a fabulous weekend! The weather did not cooperate, and yet we felt seen, known, and loved at this year's Women's Retreat. Reverend Barb Kennedy blessed us with talks about Abraham and Sarah, Psalm 139, and the lost son. She also provided us with prayer stations where we could practice gratitude, forgiveness, intercessory prayer, and laying our burdens down.

There were 33 women on this year's retreat, and once again Antiochian Village treated us like queens! There

was marvelous food and gorgeous views. Pastor Emily led us in Vespers and Worship while Jane Shadle, Brittan Curigliano, and Peggy Hatton helped us to harmonize.

There were several ladies who had never attended before who joined us, and they were pleased they came. The fellowship was once again fantastic and our time went by much too quickly. Many women are anxiously looking forward to next year; perhaps you could join us then too!

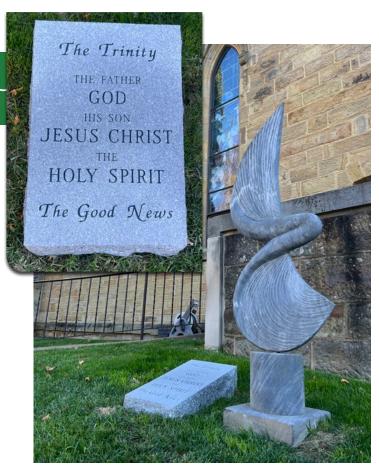


DOLLARS & SENSE

By Laura Mikush, Business Administrator

Did you know that a memorial plaque for the Trinity statue has been installed? The statue is located just outside of the Grant St. entrance to the sanctuary (near the ramp). The statue was installed in November of 2022. It was a gift from church member Nancy Hansen who passed away this year.

The plaque explains the meaning of each section of the statue. Landscaping will be done in the spring to beautify the area.





DISCIPLESHIP & SPC

By Erin Leghorn, Director of Discipleship Ministries

At SPC, we are blessed to be able to offer a Discipleship hour on Sunday mornings for all ages. For the adults in our congregation, we aim to provide a variety of options for discipleship opportunities so there is something for everyone. One of the things we are blessed with is the ability to bring in guest speakers from different walks of life, all who enrich our understanding of what it means to be a disciple and how to live out our faith!

This year, our adult education program is using the Follow Me curriculum from PC(USA). This curriculum uses 4-week modules or units that each focus on a 'Biblical Practice for Faithful Living'. The units will be explored in different ways in all three our adult education classes. In between each unit, we will all gather together for a guest speaker.

To start the year off and prepare us for our first unit 'Follow Jesus', we welcomed Dr. Tucker Ferda from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary as our first guest speaker. Dr. Ferda is an Associate Professor of New Testament and an award-winning Bible Scholar. How blessed we are to be able have him share his work and wisdom with us!

Dr. Ferda led a 3-part series about Discipleship during which he talked about discipleship in general, how we define it, and what it looked like in both the Old and New

Testament. He explored passages from the Gospels that illustrated the call stories of some of Jesus' disciples and the experiences they had as his followers. The stories illustrated that there are different 'models of discipleship' and that people come to follow Jesus in different ways.

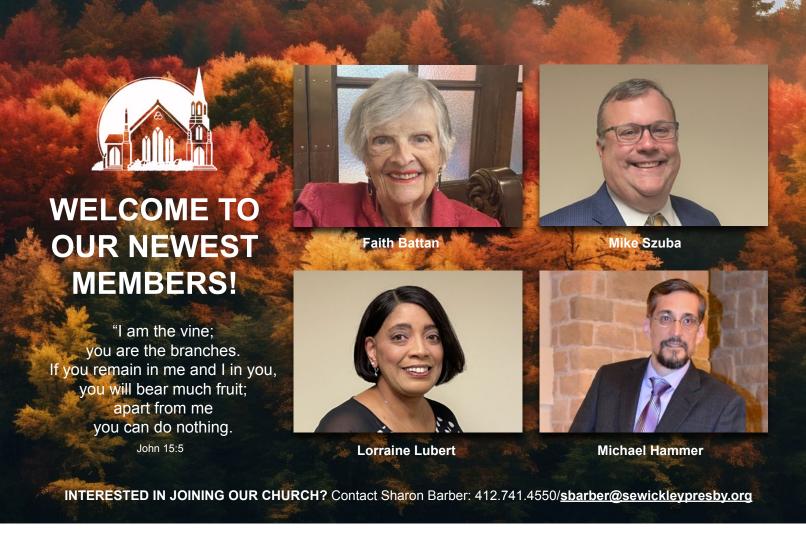
As we finish 'Follow Jesus' in our classes, we are looking ahead to our next unit which is entitled 'Hope' which will begin on Sunday, November 12. Our guest speaker on November 5 was SPC's own Rici Brockinson. Many of you may not have met Rici yet, but she is hard at work every Sunday making sure that our services can be viewed at home for people who can't be here in person.

Last year, Rici traveled to Sierra Leone to film a documentary about the Baana Nursery and Preparatory School which just celebrated 55 years since it's opening. Rici shared a portion of her documentary and told the inspring story of how a woman named Leyinde Rosa Baana Hannah Susan Pabs-Garno followed a call to open a daycare in her living room 55 years ago!

We hope you will join us in one of our adult education classes this year! If you're not sure which class is right for you, email Erin Leghorn for information: eleghorn@sewickleypresby.org.

Check out our website for upcoming opportunities to learn more about following Jesus:

sewickleypresby.org/sunday-classes







BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

By Pastor Emily Miller, Associate Pastor



What a glorious day it was on September 30 as we held our Blessing of the Animals service outside on our lawn! Many dogs and cats attended, as well as an adorable guinea pig who liked cookies. First, we listened to some stories about St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals. Then we prayed aloud for animals of all kinds. Finally, the pets were so patient as they waited their turn to be blessed by Pastor Mike and me. It was an honor to bring God's blessing of health and happiness to Thor, Shadow, Josie, and all of God's creatures.

Our congregation, which is full of animal lovers, was well-represented in this event. But amazingly, so were our neighbors! At least half of the attendees, both furry and human, were non-members from our community. So, this turned out to be a day for the animals, but also a day of outreach as well. Many thanks to Pastor Mike, Heather Semple and Judee Rooney for helping to make this a special event. I look forward to meeting more pets next year!

Loving all of God's creatures -- Pastor Emily





IRELAND PILGRIMAGE

By Pastor Emily Miller, Associate Pastor

October 5-15, 2024

Amazing opportunity awaits as we gather a group from SPC to travel to Ireland in October 2024. We go together as pilgrims, looking to deepen our relationship with God and learn how Christians throughout the centuries have done so through our study of Celtic spirituality. Here is a brief synopsis of the trip:

This eleven-day pilgrimage provides an opportunity to explore Celtic Spirituality and presence across Ireland. Highlights include visits to Kildare and Glendalough, associated with St. Bhride (Brigid) and St. Kevin, respectively. Traveling north, pilgrims will visit Fourknocks, an ancient passage tomb and the Hill of Tara before arriving in the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland, Armagh. There, we'll visit pre-Christian worship sites at Navan Fort and the dual cathedrals of Armagh, one Roman Catholic and the other Church of Ireland. From Armagh, we travel to the Antrim Coast to visit the Giant's Causeway and Bushmills while also spending time in retreat and reflection at the intentional community of Corrymeela. Our last two nights are in Dublin, where we'll learn more about early Irish Christianity through illuminated manuscripts at Trinity College Dublin (The Book of Kells) and the Chester Beatty Library.

We will hear from Eric Doss of Progressive Pilgrimage who organized the trip for us in worship on December 10. He will be available to answer all of your questions in the Robinson Room. Please come to me with your questions as well!

Traveling with you -- Pastor Emily

LEARN MORE & REGISTER HERE:

progressivepilgrimage.com











SPC KIDS NEWS

By Hanna Mellor, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Hello! How exciting of a fall it has been! Since we last chatted, lots of new things have come about.

One of our biggest blessings is that Nicole Quaka, my partner in planning, has come aboard to Children's Ministries as our event coordinator! She is planning our events and making sure that all our kiddos are cared for with spooky KNOs, service project nights, and much much more.

We have been collaborating by utilizing the Chapel during the last 10 minutes of both Children Church services, as well as the beginning and end of Sunday School hour. Our kiddos have been doing more practice on how to respect the pews and worship in a more developmental appropriate climate during these times in our worship services. It is really a beautiful sight to see and to watch them as they listen to Mrs. Nicole's Bible lessons and my classical untrained lead singing to worship staples like "Zaccheus was a Wee Little Man."

The "littles" (5 and under) have been working on amazing projects and learning through activities such as storytelling how to love God and how much God loves them with Mrs. Nicole!

The older crew has been exploring the 10 commandments with sweetly created donut undertones during Children's

Church and we have been following Jesus along with the older crowd during Sunday School hour! Also during Sunday School hour, we have had designated weeks to focus on rehearsing as a big group for our Christmas pageant coming soon during 11 AM worship on December 17, 2023. We are hard at work perfecting our voices for the show and we hope that you will help us along the way!

All 30+ of our kids on Sunday mornings are thriving! We have been really growing in our Children's Ministries this year! We would love to have you volunteer with us during learning times, fellowship times, goofy goober times, and all the times we gather! Please reach out to either me or Nicole Quaka to sign up for some of our many events being planned! It is very low in commitment time but it is such a worthwhile and amazing way to help us live and grow in God! Please consider helping us out.

Our Club 345ers have been doing super well and are partaking in a journaling activity this year to explore and track their faith through the year.

We've started sending out a weekly kids e-newsletter to our families with kids in grades 5 and younger. Please check your emails to be kept up on what is going on and what we have planned!



Thursday, November 30 | 1:30-3 PM | Sanctuary

The Christmas season is often a time of memories, many of which are associated with music. Join Michael Hammer as he shares some of the music he has learned and performed over his 35 years as a church organist and tells about some of the memories those pieces have for him. You'll also learn a little bit about the organ, and we will sing some of the music of the season. Christmas cookies and punch to follow in the Robinson Room.

Register on our website or by calling the church office: sewickleypresby.org/412.741.4550

HAVING FUN TOGETHER

By Elizabeth Szuba, Director of Congregation Care

Evergreens is a joyful group of SPC seniors 55+ interested in engaging in the world, learning new things, and meeting new people. Recently, the Evergreens group traveled to the Phipps Conservatory for the Fall Flower Show. We learned about the origins of the conservatory and the history of the plants; all while being mesmerized by the gorgeous displays of mums and fall flowers. What a gift it was to see God's beautiful creation and to enjoy lunch together outside in late October.

Back in September, we were honored to have church member, John Orndorff, share his passion for science with the Evergreens group. John is a retired science teacher, a member of the Sewickley Query Club, and member of SPC having been baptized as a baby and confirmed as a teenager. He returned to SPC in1989 when he moved back to Sewickley. His presentation on "Hubble's Universe in the 1920s" was fascinating and involved scholarly research prepared for the Sewickley Query Club. Interestingly, John shared that the Query Club began in our church over 150 years ago by the Reverend J.B. Bittinger. We are so grateful to John for sharing his research and his passion for science with the Evergreen group.







SHOW US YOUR DECORATING SKILLS! Friday, December 15 | 5-7 PM

Do you have mad decorating skills when it comes to gingerbread houses? Or do you just enjoy frosting and candy? Whichever camp you fall into, join us for an evening of fun as we eat pizza (YUM!) and show off our decorating skills.

We'll display them in the Robinson Room on December 17.

We only have 40 houses available, so don't delay in signing up! Register on our website ASAP. Check out the details:



COST

1 House = \$10
2 Houses = \$7 each
3+ Houses = \$5 each
Pizza = donation
(Pay for houses at the party)





A NEW PASTOR

By Jennifer Johnson

We had the priviledge of ordaining Rev. Mike Creamer in August! Mike is now our Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults. Mike grew up in the Delaware area and got degrees in both Youth Ministry and Theology from Eastern University just outside of Philadelphia. After graduation he joined us as our Director of Youth Ministry in 2016.

Over the years Mike has worked alongside Elizabeth Szuba with our teens and continued to explore his call, which led him to pursue his Master of Divinity at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

We are thankful for his faithfulness in ministry, for leading our youth ministry, and for being a part of leading our church family!





LEADING THE WAY

By Elizabeth Szuba, Director of Congregation Care

We have been engaging in a process to identify what we think is important for kids and teens to learn in Sunday School while at SPC. Church member Caroline Johns is spearheading this project. It is a work in progress that we started months, even years ago. Please be praying for these individuals as they consider the future of our young people. Thank you to Caroline who is using her gifts as an educator, along with current educators Kim Safran and Erin Leghorn, and Jane Shadle who is a retired teacher.





FALL FESTIVITIES & FUN

By Rev. Mike Creamer, Associate Pastor for Youth & Young Adults

As usual, the fall has been moving quickly as we have all been finding our rhythms and routines together. Between Sunday School, Youth Group and High School Breakfast our weeks have been busy (in the best kind of way)! Caroline Johns and Kim Safran have been leading our Middle Schoolers on Sunday mornings and having a blast exploring faith together. And at high school breakfast we've been ecstatic about the student leadership, having students pick the topics, questions and focus points for our discussions and deep dives.

One shift this fall was the relaunch of our Confirmation program, and we are excited to have 12 students going through the process this year. With veteran teachers, Jeanne Bingman and Mark Gensheimer, at the helm, we know that these students are in for a great year together.

As we lean into the colder months, we're already looking ahead to some of our favorite traditions -- from campfires

and service projects to Laurelville and Christmas festivities. We may even have a fun surprise or two in store.

So mark your calendars and make sure you don't miss any special events in the coming weeks! Some things to keep on your radar:

All-Youth Campfire November 26 | 6-7:30 PM

Christmas Stocking Drive
Collections begin on November 19
Delivery on December 7

High School Laurelville
December 1-3 | Sign up online

All-Youth Christmas Party December 17 | 4-5:30 PM









By Michael Hammer, Choir Director & Organist

For this fall's installment of our special choral services, The Word Sung, we are exploring music of our immediate ancestors, some of which may have been on the lips of the founders of Sewickley Presbyterian Church. The theme is 19th century American hymnody, much of it re-imagined in 20th century arrangements by persons like Alice Parker and Robert Shaw, who are recognized as a kind of royalty throughout the choral world. Others, like Mack Wilberg and John Rutter, have similarly giant reputations. Although Mr. Shaw passed away in 1985, the rest are with us today, including Alice Parker, who will turn 98 in December.

But it is the source material where things get really interesting. Although many of the hymns are anonymous, some of the authors are known, including a teenager who became a textile worker and a Mohican Indian who became a Presbyterian minister. Many of the authors, as well as editors and publishers, lent either their names or the names of places they lived to the tunes to which these hymns were sung; these names can sometimes seem quite odd, at least to us. Sometimes those names, like Hyfrydol, or Redhead 76, have their own stories. That the tune had to have its own name is explained by the casual relationship between a hymn's text and its tune in the 19th century such that one hymn might be sung to different tunes. The logic for doing that, as well as the sometimes unintentional comic results that come from mismatching a text and tune will be explained in the video we'll release to describe this event in more detail. It includes some anecdotes about the early history of SPC and their singing practices.

In the 19th century, a passion for singing swept the country. Religious societies were making music constantly-- even the Reformers, our forebears, who had a lingering suspicion about music's role in worship. Some famous hymnbooks of the time, such as The Sacred Harp, will furnish a few of the hymns we still recognize today. We will sing them in their earlier forms, and, if possible, without organ, that strange instrument whose coming to SPC in 1862 caused such controversy that many left the church.

Our sermon series at SPC this fall is about Hope, and the title of this service will be "Hymns of Hope." Each of these pieces express longing for something better. In some cases, that will be found when we get to the promised land, or our eternal reward.

An African-American spiritual points toward God's justice coming to us in this world. Then there are hymns about personal holiness, and having a closer relationship with God. These different responses provide a fascinating glimpse into how our ancestors addressed the idea that God isn't finished with us yet, that something better is yet to come. What better way to give vent to the awesome and exhilarating feelings that inspire than in music and song!





H&N UPDATEBy Mark Geinsheimer, SPC Member



On Saturday September 9, SPC held its annual Day on the Lawn rummage sale. The day started out rainy and grey but the weather turned out to be quite perfect - the rain cleared but the clouds lingered. After the sale, I sat down with our membership directory and tallied up how many members I remember seeing over the course of the previous few months. From Donation Drop Off Days to Prep Week to the day of the sale - I counted over 170 volunteers! Remarkable! It was probably more (I confess I don't know all 700+ members personally but I'm trying!). Due to all the hard work and the many, many hours given, we raised over \$65,000 this year to help Missions both locally and abroad. This year a group of dedicated volunteers even arrived super early one morning to appear on KDKA's Pittsburgh Today Live for a segment.

On behalf of the DOL Leadership Team - Becky Senior, Nicole Quaka and Kelly Stover and myself - we cannot begin to express our level of gratitude for the help and dedication. DOL is such a wonderful day for our church to show the community what serving God and others is all about.

DOL 2024 will be here before you know it and we get to do this all over again! Early planning will most likely begin in February of next year. Please prayerfully consider joining the team. In 2023, the Leadership team decreased from nine members to four members. We would love to see some new faces with fresh ideas! While Day on the Lawn is in many ways a well oiled machine, we are always looking for ways to improve and make the event even more successful. If you helped this year and have any feedback or suggestions for next year, please email me at jberg@sewickleypresby.org.

In the meantime, make sure you mark your calendars for Saturday, September 7, 2024 for next year's sale!

A handful of the Hammer and Nails team members have been working several Saturdays at the Sewickley Community Center "SCC" helping them to build a boxing center for a new youth boxing program spearheaded by Jaryd Boyer. Called the Premier Youth and Community Center, "PYCC" it is located adjacent to the Sewickley Wrestling Facility. The PYCC is partnering with the SCC in serving the community in many ways. The PYCC provides goal-oriented fitness training and streetwise mentoring to help youth and adults discover their best selves.

The goal of the Hammer and Nails team is to help provide the best facilities available for the PYCC to provide their support to their members. To date we have hung punching bags, netting and mirrors, painted, and cleaned. We have lots to do for the PYCC and the rest of the Sewickley Community Center.

We will be in touch soon to recruit people for some Saturday workdays and for support mid-week for those who have some free time during the work week.

AMIGOS RETREAT

By Ann Strong, SPC Member



Thirteen Amigos and leaders gathered at our church on Saturday, September 23. The weather was cool as we headed north for our 39th retreat at Camp Crestfield. One of our Amigos couldn't make it for the retreat this year due to being in the Bahamas. Our retreat started with a rousing game of flyswatters and balloons. Then we made stained glass windows to hang at home. We also gathered outside to remember our fellow Amigo, Corinne, who passed away recently.

Afterwards, we had a delicious lunch of barbeque beef, mac & cheese, baked beans and cole slaw. Lunch was followed by a bumpy, by fun, hayride. One Amigo, Ron, discovered a family of mice in a hay bale next to him! We drove across a bridge and near the woods of the campground. We finished the evening with canoeing, crafts, dinner, games and then a lovely evening walk before heading back home. Everyone was happy and said they can't wait to come back next year!



"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in"

Matthew 25:35



WARM & BRIGHT CHRISTMAS

By Suzanne Morrision, SPC Member

As we enter into our Season of Giving this November, the above scripture verse expresses the true mission of the Christmas Food basket project that the Board of Deacons coordinates as part of our outreach ministry to address food insecurity in our community. This is the 25th year that we will be providing over a week's worth of food for families and individuals in our community that find themselves unsure of when and where their next meal may come.

In order to accomplish our mission, we plan to distribute 100 Christmas Food Baskets to our neighbors in need. There are many opportunities for the congregation to become involved in this project and we are inviting you to participate. We will be collecting non-perishable food items starting Sunday, November 12 through Sunday, December 10. Safran's will once again provide perishable food items at cost. SPC members can donate cash, non-perishable food items and volunteer to deliver food baskets on Saturday, December 16.

This project is dependent on multiple levels of support of SPC members and friends. Ways that you may personally become involved are as follows:

1. Donate

Bring non-perishable food items from our shopping list between November 12th and December 10th. Place the items in the large food baskets that are conveniently located at each entrance of SPC.

2. Contribute

Make a cash contribution to the Deacons Christmas Food Basket Fund by dropping a check in the offering plate with "Deacons Christmas Food Basket" in the memo line or by visiting our website and using the drop-down menu on the "Give Page" for Food Baskets. www.sewickleypresby.org

3. Sign-up

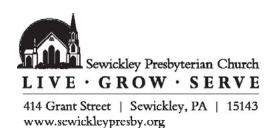
We will need volunteers to deliver food baskets to needy households and you can sign up on the SPC website. Delivery volunteers are vital to the success of this project.

4. Delivery

Distribution of the Christmas Food Baskets will take place on Saturday, December 16th. Volunteers will receive a letter with their designated recipient and instructions on the delivery. Deliveries will be made to recipients at addresses in locations between Glenfield and Ambridge. Once you have made your delivery take a moment to reflect on the joy of having participated in this worthwhile project. You will surely be blessed by the experience as will the recipients that you have been called to serve.

Collection: November 12 - December 10 Delivery Day: December 16





Dated Material PLEASE EXPEDITE

This newsletter is published by Sewickley Presbyterian Church



Center for Hope Auction December 2 | Begins at 10:30 AM

Community Christmas Concert at St. Pauls
December 10 | 4 PM

Gingerbread House Decorating Party
December 15 | 5-7 PM

Christmas Food Basket Delivery Day December 16 | 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Children's Christmas Pageant December 17 | 11 AM

All-Youth Christmas Party December 17 | 4-5:30 PM

Longest Night Service December 20 | 7 PM

Christmas Eve Worship Services December 24 | 5 & 8 PM

New Years Eve Worship Service December 31 | 10 AM

The Chosen StudyBegins January 13 | 9:30-11 AM

The Great Date Night January 19 | 7 PM