



OVERBROOK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

News from the Crossroads

December 2017

Overbrook Presbyterian Church is a welcoming and diverse Christian community that seeks actively to love and serve God, each other, and the world.

—Mission Statement

Overbrook Church Staff

Revs. Bruce and Carolyn Gillette
Co-Pastors

Rev. David K. McMillan
Pastor Emeritus

Dr. Christopher Gage
Director of Music

Lisa Faso
Office Manager

Carol Rozmiarek
Financial Secretary

Leonard Robbins
Church Custodian



Advent & Christmas at Overbrook

- December 3: 3:00 PM 24th Annual Messiah Sing
- December 16: 3:00 PM Hanging of the Greens/Family Crafts
5:00 PM Simple Buffet Dinner
6:00 PM Caroling
- December 17: 10:30 AM Commissioning of Sharon Parker
- December 21: 7:00 PM The Service of the Longest Night
- December 24: 4:00 PM Family Service (NOTE NEW TIME)
5:00 PM Christmas Eve Dinner
6:00 PM Gingerbread House Decorating
9:00 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



Every Sunday morning at 9:15 am, every Monday evening at 7:00 pm and every Wednesday afternoon at 1:00 pm through Wednesday December 20th will be a Advent Bible Study of Handel's Messiah. See page 4 under Christian Education for more information.



MESSIAH SING-ALONG

Don't Miss Overbrook's 24th Annual Messiah Sing This Sunday December 3rd at 3:00 pm.

We will be continuing this beloved tradition featuring the Overbrook Quartet and organist Paul Fleckenstein. Feel free to bring your own score, or you may purchase one at the concert. A free-will offering will be collected to benefit the music ministry of Overbrook Presbyterian Church.



Hanging of the Greens

Saturday, December 16th be sure to join us for the Hanging of the Greens and Christmas Caroling. Join Overbrook Presbyterians and friends of all ages for an afternoon and evening of fun, fellowship, food and service. Adults will gather at 3:00 p.m. to decorate the sanctuary for the Advent/Christmas season, while children and youth will enjoy making crafts and cards for homebound church members. At 5:00 p.m. there will be a simple meal for all, then at 6:00 p.m. the group will go Christmas caroling.



Service of the Longest Night—

The holidays can be difficult for us all: the stresses and strains of trying to offer a time of celebration take their toll. Many people find they have trouble feeling “in the spirit” of things, whether because of the recent death of a family member or friend, the end of a marriage, the loss of work, or other trying change. This year we will gather on **Thursday December 21st at 7:00pm** for A Service of the Longest Night. Is it so named because of its proximity to the winter solstice—the longest night of the year. But the name is also fitting because—despite the wrappings of gifts, special meals, and Christmas carols—the season can be darker than “normal” times of the year for those who struggle.



Christmas Eve is on a Sunday this year! Join us in the morning as together we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Advent at 10:30 a.m. There will be no morning Sunday School. Join us again for the Family Service at 4:00 p.m. followed by dinner, gingerbread house decorating and candlelight service at 9:00 pm. See page 3 for more information on Christmas Eve.

From Our Pastors: *Joy to the World*

“Joy to the World” is one of our favorite Christmas carols. We are not alone in liking it; *Wikipedia* reports that it is the most-published Christmas hymn in North America. Issac Watts wrote it as a paraphrase of Psalm 98 and it was published in his collection titled *Psalms of David Imitated* (1719) under the heading *The Messiah's Coming and Kingdom*. Look again at the words of this wonderful hymn-prayer:

*Joy to the world; the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heav'n and nature sing...*

*Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns,
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy...*

*No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found...*

*He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love...*

Overbrook Church has been blessed with the baptism of several babies in recent months: Nehemiah Mahasin Bell and Yvenelly Carla Gracia on August 27; Lucas Ziemba on September 17; and Norah Pagbaya (with her mother Laura Adabia) on September 24. Theodore Baker will be baptized on December 10th. Looking at a baby brings smiles to our faces and joy to our hearts (we have some great photos of our five month old grandson Logan if you want to smile and have more joy). Remembering that Jesus came into this world as a baby on that Christmas long ago does the same thing and inspires some of the most joyful music that we know.

Sometimes we forget that joy is central to the Christian life. Centuries ago, when the best-known Presbyterian statement of faith was being written, the authors made the very first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism to be: “What is the chief end of man?” In contemporary language we might ask: Why are we here? What is the purpose of our lives? The Catechism’s famous answer is “To glorify God and enjoy him forever.” God created us for service (glorifying God in words and deeds), but also to enjoy this gift of life, now and forever. At Christmas, God sent his Son into to help us know his love and joy .love and joy.

Between Heaven and Mirth: Why Joy, Humor, and Laughter Are at the Heart of the Spiritual Life by James Martin, SJ, includes this insight: “God relentlessly introduces into even the most serious of situations -- whether we like it or not -- joy, humor and laughter. This happens mainly through our own very human mistakes, which reveals to us our very human limitations. Everyone has a favorite story about a snafu, a slipup or a stupid thing they did or said in the midst of their ministry that prompted gales of unexpected laughter. God brings joy, humor and laughter into churches through our humanity, on a regular basis, which is something that we should rejoice about.”

His book goes on to share “11 reasons for humor and joy”:

- Humor and joy evangelize others by showing our hope. Humor can shock listeners into recognizing reality.
- Self-deprecating humor reminds us not to take ourselves too seriously.
- Humor can speak truth to power.
- Joy, humor and laughter show Christian courage in the face of adversity.
- Humor deepens our relationship with God by encouraging us to smile in prayer.
- Humor and laughter welcome others into group.
- Laughter helps in the healing process.
- Humor fosters good human relations.
- Laughter relaxes us and so opens our minds.
- Humor is fun, a gracious gift to enjoy.

In these Advent weeks of preparing to celebrate our Savior’s birth, we hope you will find time each day to read the Bible (the Advent Devotional by Overbrook Presbyterians is a great resource), to pray and to be guided by the Holy Spirit in acts of faith and love. Whatever you are doing, we hope it will also be filled with joy as you know God loves you and sent Jesus to be our Lord and Savior to show the “wonders of his love.”

Grace and Peace,
Bruce & Carolyn Gillette



Advent & Christmas at Overbrook (continued)

Overbrook Presbyterian Church Commissioning Sharon Parker



Our worship service on December 17 will include the commissioning of Sharon Parker for her upcoming overseas mission service. With the endorsement of Rev. Barry and Shelly Dawson, Presbyterian Church (USA) Liaisons for Southeast Asia Missions, the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar has called Sharon to serve as a teaching missionary at Tahan Theological College in Kalaymyo. Her role will be to teach English to clergy and seminarians. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she is hopeful that she will be able to be of service to the broader Chin tribal community. Sharon will leave for Myanmar on January 2 and expects to return to Philadelphia on February 10. We will be setting up a daily prayer sign-up for Sharon and posting updates from her on Overbrook Church's web site and Facebook.

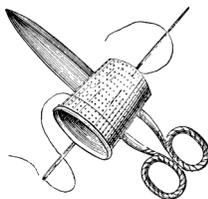
CHRISTMAS EVE



(Continued from cover)
Immediately following the

Family Service, we will be serving a simple supper of sandwiches, soup, veggie sticks and cookies. Gingerbread houses will be ready for decorating at 6:00 p.m. PLEASE NOTE NEW TIMES. This evening's plans are a long-time OPC tradition. Serving a simple meal (we will be collecting a free will donation) helps the cooks in your home get a much needed break from the hectic holiday schedule. Grown OPC "children" come back year after year for the gingerbread house decorating. Any families interested in the Gingerbread House Decorating, please email the office@overbrookpresb.org or call the church office (215-877-2744) to reserve a house. Everyone is welcome. The Christmas Eve candle-light service will be at 9:00 p.m.

Costumers needed: As we look ahead to this year's Christmas Pageant, we want to assure that the shepherds, residents of Bethlehem, and the wise visitors from the East are properly attired. A few more costumes are needed and only simple stitchery is required. Please contact Pastor Carolyn if you are able to help with "refreshing" the costumes in December, so they are ready for Christmas Eve.



Greens Needed by Thursday noon, December 14: Do you have evergreens in your yard that could use a good trim just in time for Christmas? Do you find joy in shopping for just the right greens to help make a room beautiful for the holiday season? Donations of greens are welcomed and needed. Please bring them to church by **Thursday, December 14th at noon**, so we know how many greens we still need to buy for decorating the sanctuary on that Saturday.



Overbrook's Advent Devotional: 23 Overbrook Presbyterians have written daily devotionals for us all to enjoy during this special season. Copies of this devotional booklet are available in the Wistar Morris Room during coffee hour, in our church office and can also be found on our church web site, www.overbrookpresb.org.



Everyone is invited to come join Peter Seidel, art teacher and Overbrook member, to consider the reason for the season! On January 7th, come join Peter Seidel from 1:30-3:00pm for "The Art of Christmas Season Seven Centuries of Sacred Art at the Philadelphia". Everyone is to gather on the 2nd floor balcony in the Great Hall of the Philadelphia Art Museum at 1:30pm. The cost is "Pay what you wish" Sunday at the museum. There is plenty of parking at the museum or member can carpool from the church right after service.

Mission and Outreach



OPC's Annual Fair Trade Market- December 2nd and 3rd –Get that holiday shopping out of the way by purchasing fair trade goods from around the globe. It's not often that most of us feel powerful. The Fair Trade Market at OPC gives us an opportunity to be superheroes simply by purchasing some fantastic crafts, food and gifts.

Here's an example:

A handcrafted product that you purchase from Bamboula Ltd. contributes directly to the economic and social well being of African artisans and their families. Most artisans use the money they earn from Bamboula Ltd. for basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, education, and medical services.

What good will your few dollars do, you ask? Well, 50% of Africans live on less than \$1.00 a day. Because of the work of Bamboula (and Overbrook volunteers) a substantial percentage of the purchase price makes it back to the artist. Poverty is replaced with a living wage.

- ❖ **The Women's Bean Project** - Teaches job readiness and life skills for entry-level jobs through employment in the gourmet food business – tasty gourmet food
- ❖ **Tabitha** - Silk products generate funds used to help the poorest people in Cambodia by running self-help programs focusing on personal and financial development
- ❖ **Bamboula Ltd.** - Living wages for Africa
- ❖ **Equal Exchange** - coffee, chocolate, tea, cocoa and more
- ❖ **Ten Thousand Villages** - As a Fair Trade Pioneer, we believe market-based solutions can end the cycle of poverty (<http://www.tenthousandvillages.com/about-us/>)
- ❖ **Global Crafts** - "Our mission is simple - to improve the lives of some of the people with whom we share this planet." (<https://www.globalcrafts.org/>)

Come to our Market, do some shopping and change some lives!

HOLIDAY GIVING - 2017 - ADOPT A FAMILY



Each year at this time, the OPC congregation helps several poor families to experience the wonder of Christmas by participating in an "Adopt-A-Family" program through which we purchase gifts for children and parents that otherwise could not afford them. As in previous years, families have been identified by a local agency for OPC members to "adopt", in order to fulfill their Christmas wishes. You may purchase gifts or provide funds to buy one or more gifts on your person's wish list. Adopt-A Family is a nice opportunity to engage your children in an Advent activity. Members of the Mission and Outreach Committee will be in the Wistar-Morris room after Sunday services to show you the lists and help you choose a match. Specific instructions will be provided at that time. All gifts must be brought to the church on or before Sunday December 17th. Thank you for participating again this year. Speak to Emily or Jim Vagnoni for more information.

Travel to Thailand to Visit the Overbrook Hospital

Details on our spring trip to Chaing Rai, Thailand have been finalized. We will depart from Philadelphia on the morning of Thursday, February 22 and arrive back on the morning of Tuesday, March 6. The first half of the trip will be spent in Chaing Rai with our friends from the Overbrook Hospital and the second half spent sightseeing in Bangkok. The cost will be approximately \$3124 if you stay with a church family in Chaing Rai or \$3774 if you prefer to stay in a hotel while in Chaing Rai. Our travel agent will happily customize your trip if you would like to shorten your trip, extend your trip, or add other destinations or side trips either on the way or on the way home. The detailed itinerary is available on the OPC website or email Will Schick (willsch84@yahoo.com) for details and answers to your questions.

The highlight of our trip will be the ceremony on Wednesday, February 28 celebrating the 115 year relationship between the Overbrook Church at the Crossroads and the Overbrook Hospital in Chaing Rai. We hope to visit not only the hospital, but also the affiliated school and orphanage as well as other Presbyterian churches in and around Chaing Rai.

Mission and Outreach (Continued)



WE CARE WEDNESDAYS – MARK YOUR 2018 CALENDARS!

Almost everyone likes to feel cared for and go out for dinner once in a while. This coming year Overbrook Presbyterian Church community has the opportunity to enjoy a weekly meal out and contribute (at no extra cost) to one of the Church's most vital ministries – Feed My Starving Children. So get ready, mark your calendars for the third (3rd) Wednesday of the next four months, **January through April**, and enjoy a meal while providing “Care at the Crossroads.” The meal is part of the 2018 fundraising for Feed My Starving Children (FMSC). Last Year Overbrook Presbyterian Church, in response to the estimated 925 million people that are chronically hungry in the world, joined this international effort as our Christians to respond such immense need. Because of both the enormity and complexity of the project, OPC forged a partnership with Monsignor Bonner/ Archbishop Prendergast (MBAP) High School in Drexel Hill seeking to generate more than 100,000 meals to feed hungry children. OPC and MBAP also accepted the challenge to raise \$24,000 to cover the cost of the food, it's preparation in individual meals, and it's distribution to needy children around the globe.

The first “We Care Wednesday” is **January 24, 2018** (tentatively at the Panera Bread in Wynnewood Shopping Center on Lancaster Pike). Please plan to Care on this and the other third Wednesdays; and - by the way - be cared

Finance

Financial Reminder



As the year 2017 ends please remember:

All Pledge, Non-Pledge, Mission, Performing Arts and Apportionment offerings for 2017 must either be postmarked by no later than December 31, 2017 or placed in the Sunday collection plate by December 31, 2017. Any offerings postmarked or hand delivered after December 31, 2016 will be posted to your 2018 donor history, not your 2017 record.

Thank you, Carol Rozmiarek, Financial Secretary

Stewardship

2018 Pledge Drive



Pledge cards for the 2018 OPC fiscal year are still dribbling in. Thanks you so much to all who have pledged! By making a pledge, you make the lives of our volunteer treasurer and finance committee and our volunteer Session members so much easier as they craft a budget for the coming year. If you have yet to pledge, please consider doing so. You can mail your pledge card if you like or drop it in the collection plate any Sunday. A pledge card can be downloaded and printed from the OPC website or see Will Schick or another stewardship committee member for one

Community



NCT's run of The Mystery of Edwin Drood dropped its final curtain on November 18, a Saturday night. It is with great appreciation to the following concessionaires who enabled us to garnered slightly more than eight hundred dollars in profits. **KUDOS** to Jane and Carol Rozmariak, Edelene Carroll, Nancy Gilhool, Laine Blodgett, Nickie Stokes, Lois Randel, Jill Van-Rawley, Noble Brigham, Barbara Adams, Kadie Whalen, Suchita and Aria Fiorelli, Sabrina Johnson, Joan Moylan, Judy and Dick Williamson, Sharon Parker, Bob and Peggy Kaercher, Linda Huff-Paul, Jason and I Mei Sheau, and Janet Bowker. -With Much Thanks, Trudy Sheau

Deacons



Prayer List

12/02-Allison Kothari	12/11-Alyce Marsh
Caroline Kothari	12/13-Christine Stephens
12/03-Jim Stephens	12/18-Maya Mendoza
12/06-Sue Graydon	12/19-Andrew Paul
12/08-Rebecca Rottinger	12/20-Bob Kaercher
Margaret Mason	12/29-ZeeAnn Mason
12/09-Chanel Young	Christopher Schwartz
12/10-Margene Biedermann	12/30-John Gattone
	12/31-Max Mason

- ◆Keedra Carroll and Greg Goodwin on their recent engagement.
- ◆Lynn Pompa continued health issues.
- ◆Gloria Justin continued recovery from car accident
- ◆Barbara Rittenhouse continued recovery from car accident
- ◆Thom D'Antoino recovering from surgery
- ◆Elizabeth Bouzarth recovering from surgery
- ◆Marita Patino-Treat suffering from health issues
- ◆Wilda Hayward on joining our OPC family.
- ◆Carolynn Jackson on joining our OPC family.
- ◆Eric and Ashley Marshall on joining our OPC family.
- ◆Chris Gage on the recent death of his grandmother.
- ◆Claire Gage, Chris's mom, on the recent death of her mother.

Please contact Pastors Bruce or Carolyn to add names or concerns to this list. Bruce and Carolyn can be reached by email, cell phone, or by leaving a message in the Church Office, or by speaking with one of them in person.

Pastoral CARE

Pastoral Care & Feedback

Welcome: We are grateful to people who let us know about pastoral needs in our church and community. We welcome visiting people in their homes, at work, in the hospital and at the church. We welcome the opportunity to bring home communion to anyone who would like to receive the sacrament.

Please contact us by email or phone: pastors@overbrookpresb.org, bruce@overbrookpresb.org or carolyn@overbrookpresb.org or call us (Office: 215-877-2744 or Bruce's Cell: 302-528-1796 or Carolyn's Cell: 302-528-1797) if you, or someone you know, would like a visit from an Overbrook pastor . Your ideas, feedback and prayers help us all serve better together. See our contact information above so we can have a conversation with you soon. Thank you. Pastors Bruce & Carolyn Gillette



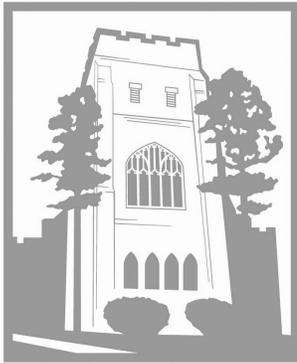
Remember to Sign the Prayer Cards:

These cards are located on the raised table in the Wistar Morris Room. We ask all church members and friends to please sign these cards before or after worship each Sunday. "You were remembered this Sunday in the prayers of the people of the Overbrook Church in Philadelphia" is the message found on prayer cards. Please contact our pastors or church office if you would like us to send a prayer card to someone.

Holiday Visits?

Sometimes the holidays are not so joyous for some of our community. Do you know of someone or some family who could use an extra visit during this time? Is so, please forward their name to the church office for our pastors and/or the deacons attention. Thank you!

News from the Crossroads



Overbrook Presbyterian Church

6376 City Avenue ♦ Philadelphia, PA 19151

215-877-2744 ♦ office@overbrookpresb.org

www.overbrookpresb.org

Church Office Hours

Mon., Wed., & Fri.
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Tues., & Thurs.
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Coming Up

Fair Trade Market-This Coming Weekend Saturday and Sunday, December 2nd and 3rd starting at 9:00 am. For more information see Mission and Outreach on page 5.

Special Congregational Meeting: Immediately after worship on Sunday December 10, there will be a Special Congregational Meeting to receive the report of the Nominating Committee posting their slate of nominees for Elder, Deacon and the At-Large Members of the 2018 Nominating Committee. Since, this meeting is a Special Congregational Meeting, no other business may be conducted except the business at hand.

Commissioning of Sharon Parker on December 17th during worship. Sharon will be commissioned before her mission trip to Myanmar. For more information see page 3.

Worship

Worship SCHEDULE

Sundays in December

December 3, 2017

Communion
1st Sunday of Advent
Mark 13:24-37
Preaching: Pastor Bruce Gillette
Lay Leader: Andrea Knight
Coffee Hour: TBD

December 10, 2017

2nd Sunday of Advent
Mark 1:1-8
Preaching: Pastor Carolyn Gillette
Lay Leader: Mary Scott
Coffee Hour: Carroll Family/Alyce Marsh

December 17, 2017

3rd Sunday of Advent
John 1:6-8, 19-28
Preaching: Pastor Bruce Gillette
Lay Leader: Amos Paul
Coffee Hour: TBD

December 24, 2017

Christmas Eve
Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)
Preaching: Pastor Carolyn Gillette
Lay Leader: Jill Van Rawley
Coffee Hour: TBD

December 31, 2017

1st Sunday after Christmas Day
Luke 2:22-40
Preaching: Pastor Bruce Gillette
Lay Leader: Emily Amerman
Coffee Hour: TBD