



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

Rev. Dr. Adam Hearlson
Designated Pastor

Rev. David K. McMillan
Pastor Emeritus

Dr. Christopher Gage
Director of Music

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Inside This Issue:

Messiah Sing.....	2
Christmas Eve.....	3
Fellowship.....	4
Outreach.....	4
Christian Ed	5
Green Team.....	6
Finance.....	6
Deacons.....	7
Weekly Opportunities	back page
Prayer and Care Team	back page

OVERBROOK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

News from the Crossroads

Advent/Christmas Edition

2020 has forced some changes, but it has not canceled our spirit! Advent and Christmas at OPC may look a little different this year, and that's OK! We are adapting the traditions we have come to know and love, and creating other experiences to build brand new memories. Join us! Below is a list of Advent/Christmas events at OPC.

Advent

December 6 - Advent II - The second candle in the Advent wreath, the candle of peace, will be lighted by the Long family. Adam Hearlson will preach. Messiah Sing at 3:00 p.m.-see page 2 for more details on Messiah Sing.

December 13 - Advent III - The third candle in the Advent wreath, the candle of joy, will be lighted by the Carroll/Goodwin family. We will also have the "Greening of the Church" adapted for our new conditions. We can't have a parade of poinsettias through the sanctuary or sprays of evergreens hung from church rafters. However, we have learned well over the past few months that our homes can be sacred worship spaces, and the "church" is more about the people than the building. So on December 13, please join virtual worship with your homemade chrismons (from supplies in your Advent bag!) and prepare to reimagine the Greening of the Church as we learn more about Advent season symbols.

December 20 - Advent IV - The fourth candle in the Advent wreath, the candle of love, will be lighted by the Goedde family.

December 21 - Service of the Longest Night at 7:00 pm- Adam will lead this service of reflection, compassion, and healing specially planned for those who find the Advent and Christmas seasons difficult.

Christmas Eve

December 24 at Noon-6:00 -Live Nativity—OPC Parking Lot-see page (3) for more information.

December 24 at 5:00 - Christian Education will stage their first Zoom Pageant titled "Do Not Be Afraid." All the children of the church from birth to 101 are invited to be a part of the pageant. The Charles/Brown family will light the Christ candle.

December 24 at 9:00 - Lessons and Carols. The traditional telling of the birth through scripture and music will be presented by Zoom.

Christmas

December 27 - Christmas I - The time to make a joyful noise and sing all those Christmas carols we love.- Sunday worship at 10:30 am.

January 3 - Christmas II - More Christmas carols and guest preacher, Casey Thompson Sr. Pastor of Wayne Presbyterian Church.-Sunday worship at 10:30 am.

Overbrook Presbyterian Church

Messiah Sing

ONLINE!

featuring

The Overbrook Quartet

Paul Fleckenstein, organist

Christopher Gage, conductor

and you!

a beloved Advent tradition continues

from many places, one in spirit and song

get info | find scores | tune in

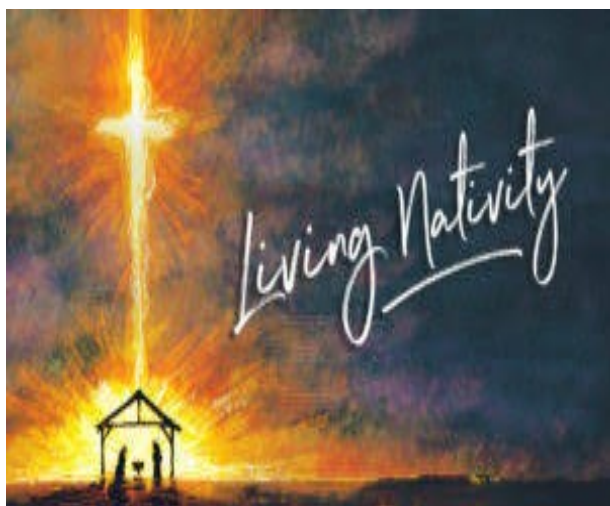
www.overbrookpresb.org/messiah

Sunday, December 6
3:00 p.m.

The Messiah Sing enters its twenty-sixth year, still going strong, featuring the Overbrook Quartet and organist Paul Fleckenstein, along with arias and choruses from all three parts of Handel's masterpiece. Of course, it will be just a little different and *we need you to make it work!* Visit www.overbrookpresb.org/messiah on the day of the event to tune into the livestream and download the musical score, prepared especially for us, to sing along. We are delighted our Quartet and Chris Gage will be able to come to you safely from our sanctuary, with the use of our new audio/visual system. Although it might seem strange to sing on your own in front of your computer or phone, know that you are adding your voice to the chorus of singers, scattered throughout the Philadelphia area and beyond, who are celebrating with you.

CHRISTMAS EVE

HERE IS WHAT IS HAPPENING



Live Nativity - OPC will stage a Live Nativity in the church parking lot on Christmas Eve from noon until 6:00 p.m. Max Mason and Peter Seidel have started building the stable and will be recruiting more carpenters to help. Rachel Carnahan and Sharon Parker are making costumes. Walter the donkey and his sheep and calf friends are looking forward to their trip to Overbrook where they will be joined by a rotating cast of costumed figures. Each hour, volunteer members of the congregation will portray Mary, Joseph, shepherds, the inn-keeper, an angel and villagers. We will adhere to all safety guidelines and participants will be masked and distanced. If conditions allow, there may be an opportunity to pet and take photos with the animals.



Our Family Service and Christmas Pageant will begin at 5:00 pm on Zoom. As strange as it sounds, the appropriately named "Do Not Be Afraid" Christmas pageant 2020 will be virtual and will feature enthusiastic members of the Christian Education committee leading children, youth (and adults!) in a pageant to celebrate the birth of our Savior! The shepherds, angels, Mary and Joseph will be zooming to you wherever you are at 5:00 pm December 24. If you or your family are interested in participating in the pageant, please head to <https://tinyurl.com/y56p7lcc>. Have questions? Contact Anthony (anthony@overbrookpresb.org) or Becky (rebeccalazo@hotmail.com).



Our Christmas Eve celebrations continue later in the evening with the Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols at 9:00 pm. The service might look and feel different, but the soloists, choir members and Chris Gage are working together to produce music and readings that will properly and joyously celebrate the birth of Christ.

FELLOWSHIP AND OUTREACH

Opportunities Throughout December



Calling all gingerbread makers and decorators to participate in a virtual gingerbread house decorating contest! To get in on the fun, decorate a gingerbread house - homemade or store-bought - and enter it in one of several special categories for competition. Starting December 19, submit a photo of the house to our Community Facebook page [Link to OPC Facebook](#), making sure to include the name of the decorators and your category on an index card in the photo or in your post. If you are unable to post your photo to Facebook, please email it to Karen Wong, (testawong@gmail.com) or the office at (office@overbrookpresb.org). One entry per family. Deadline to enter is December 24. People can cast their vote for their favorite house by liking a photo. Voting closes December 27 and winners will be announced at worship January 3. If you cannot find or bake your own house to decorate, please contact Artia, newlife5125@gmail.com. If you would like a gluten free recipe to make your gingerbread house, follow the attached link [GlutenFreeGingerbreadHouseRecipe](#)

Categories for Gingerbread Houses

Gumdrop house

Candy cane house

Houses decorated by children 9 and under

Homemade gingerbread house

Young adults

Multigenerational decorators



RPM is back!



OPC's Retired Person's Ministry is back in action! Via Zoom, RPM offers thought-provoking presentations, good spirited discussions, and opportunities to remain connected during this time of distancing.

Please join us on December 18, from 1:00-2:00 PM, for a special holiday program, "*I'll Be Home for Christmas!*" Let's Zoom-gather with OPC friends, sharing the sounds and traditions of the season, as well as strategies for joyful, healthy celebrations. The RPM Elf will be reaching out and inviting musicians, story tellers, and humorists to create an hour of RPM holiday delight. 'Tis the season to be (safe) and jolly...join us through the following zoom link: [RPM-I'll be Home for Christmas Link](#)

-Passcode: 192280 or join by phone at 646-558-8656 and enter Meeting ID: 955 2474 7682

Donate to Pathways PA



Over the past several years, we have supported Pathways PA through the Adopt A Family Christmas gift donation program. This shelter is the only one in the region that is designed to keep families and children together. This year we cannot provide gifts, due to Covid restrictions. We can provide them with the funds to purchase the things they need and create a safe Christmas for these families. To donate please follow the link to: [DonatePathwaysPA](#)

What's New in Christian Ed?

Update from the Christian Education Committee

Our full committee continues to meet monthly to discuss ways to deliver engaging instruction, programs, and messages to children and youth during a pandemic. No small task! With some creative animations for Children's Messages and timely discussion topics for youth; from what we can tell, we are managing well during these physically distant times. While we desperately want to host in-person events, the rise in COVID cases in our area and new restrictions prohibits that at this time. Stay tuned for some creative ideas to continue to engage the children and support their faith.

By now you've celebrated Thanksgiving and opened up that Advent bag... hopefully you're enjoying a daily devotion, and if you have young people in your home, you're exercising your creative side and making some ornaments to decorate your home or give as gifts. Please also consider getting involved with the pageant. However you are observing Advent, we hope you're able to take the time to be still and reflect on God's faithfulness and the promise of our Savior's birth in just a few weeks.

Wishing you peace & joy this season,
Becky, Anthony, and the Christian Education Committee

Children's and Youth Program Opportunities

Children's Messages:

Is your family interested in participating in a Children's Message storytelling? Slots are open beginning in January! Contact Trudy Sheau or Anthony Carrella for additional details.

Sunday School

Sunday School is held on the second and third Sundays of each month over Zoom. We have watched attendance and participation grow month after month, and have seen our children's engagement deepen. We can't wait for our next lesson! December's Sunday School time will be used to teach about Advent and rehearse the Christmas Pageant. We invite you to join us on December 13th and 20th at 12:00 PM. Beginning in January, Sunday School will begin teaching on The

Beatitudes! Our thirty minute sessions are rich and interactive, and aim to foster a sense of safe, loving community. In 2021, we look forward to releasing recordings of our lessons for families who can't attend Sunday School live, and also distributing parent resources for lesson enrichment at-home.

Youth Group

Our Middle Schoolers have been gathering for Youth Group on the third or fourth Wednesdays of the month at 6:00 PM. We've been reading sections of James' Letter and uncovering insights about how to rise above trials and temptations. We've also taken a look at tools for self reflection, mindfulness, and creative discovery.

Middle Schoolers will meet for the final time in 2020 on Tuesday, December 15th. We're looking forward to having a *virtual Christmas Party!* Middle Schoolers will be able to pick up a few Christmas Treats at OPC prior to our gathering. For those who weren't at our last gathering, you can expect a number of games as well as a netflix party. See you there!



Collegiate Luncheon for High School Seniors and College Students

The members of OPC have been keeping you in prayer during this semester. We have watched you rise above a number of challenges, and we are very proud of you. In a few weeks, check your or your parent's email; the Congregational Life and Christian Education Committees will be sending you a small holiday gift to celebrate your achievements this semester!

Attached to our gift, you'll find an invitation for any High School Senior, graduate, or college student to gather with us virtually on **Sunday, January 10th, 2021**. Together, we'll share a short virtual lunch, catch up, celebrate accomplishments, and invite your input on several of OPC's projects. This is a low-pressure time to be with your community, share stories and information, and celebrate the new year.

Women's Support and Prayer Group

Women's Support and Prayer Group

...and who among us doesn't need prayer and friendly peer support during these exciting times? An opportunity for shared conversation, spiritual support, good humor, and group prayer is offered every Tuesday at 7:30 AM. You are warmly invited to start your Tuesday mornings with a group of women for whom "Amen" is not an ending, but a hopeful beginning.

Please consider us to be your prayer partners. As we do each Sunday, all who gather on Tuesday will pray with and for you. We encourage you to send us your requests ...and each will be faithfully lifted in prayer. Prayer requests may be sent to Sharon Parker (sparker614@gmail.com)

Green Team News

Our bench made from recycled plastic has been ordered and should arrive in a month or two. Thank you for bringing in the 500 lbs of clean soft plastic that made this bench possible! So far Overbrook has collected 109.6 lbs towards earning a second bench. A great effort considering being in a pandemic. Christmas, with its deluge of bubble wrap and plastic bags will give Overbrook members a renewed source of plastic to recycle!

Due to Covid-19, not all Giant, Acme, and Home Depot stores are currently collecting plastic bags. Check with your local stores to see if they are currently participating. The Giant store in Wynnewood has doubled the amount of plastic collection containers. Several Acme stores in our area also continue to have collection bins.

The following are soft plastics acceptable for recycling: grocery bags, bread bags, case overwrap, dry cleaning bags, newspaper sleeves, ice bags, wood bags, pellet bags, ziplock bags, produce bags, bubble wrap, salt bags, and cereal bags. *All materials must be clean, dry and free of food residue.*

In order to have your donation count, please weigh the plastic at home and send in the weight (in lbs) to margenebiedermann@gmail.com, gretchenboger@gmail.com, or kaswhalen@gmail.com. We will record the weight and send it to the Trex Company for credit towards bench #2. Thank you for supporting this effort!

Finance Committee

As we shared in last month's newsletter, our revised 2020 budget shows up ending the year with a deficit due to three factors: 1) the loss of rental revenue, 2) property needs, and 3) personnel support. While we were expecting to run a deficit of \$136,000 for 2020, we have not yet withdrawn any funds from the Endowment. We believe that the generosity we have seen from the congregation will reduce the amount that we will require from the Endowment this year. So far, indications are positive.

This year we also received a PPP loan which covered the church staff payroll for a period of approximately 2.5 months. The forgiveness application for this PPP loan was submitted earlier this month. We are hopeful that we will not have to pay back any portion of the loan, which will also help reduce the amount needed from the Endowment.

When we reflect on all that has been accomplished this year to aid members of our local community, maintain our historic building, pay our staff and generally weather the impacts of a pandemic, we are pleased with our current financial situation. We realize that we are entering the new year with as many unknowns as we faced in 2020, and will do our best to predict the financial needs of the church in the next budget. If you are planning to give to OPC next year, we would ask that you prayerfully consider and pledge the amount that you feel most comfortable giving, as the pledged revenue is one piece of information that we can consider "almost certain" in this world of uncertainty, and every little bit helps.

We would like to wrap up the year with a big thank you to everyone in the congregation for your kindness and ongoing generosity, which continue to breathe life into our mission and ministry here at Overbrook Church.

Deacons

Happy December Birthdays

12/2	Allison Kothari	12/11	Alyce Marsh
	Caroline Kothari	12/13	Christine Stephens
12/3	Jim Stephens	12/16	Ameerah Skipper
12/6	Karen Taussig-Lux	12/17	Eva Wilson
12/7	Tyrone Frisby	12/18	Maya Mendoza
12/8	Rebecca Rottinger	12/19	Andrew Paul
12/9	Adzo Gasonu	12/20	Bob Kaercher
	Alice Lank	12/27	Anne Bezbatchenko
12/10	Margene Biedermann	12/29	ZeeAnn Mason
		12/31	Max Mason



I hope everyone had a safe and Happy Thanksgiving. I want to thank everyone for their concern, love and prayers for our family. Blessings, Margaret Young

We're
here
for you

OPC Deacons

Overbrook's Deacons are a remarkable team who minister in myriad ways. The Deacons are making telephone rounds to ensure contact is made with every member of the community and to check in on any prayer or other needs. They help the sick, the home-bound, the grieving. They celebrate milestones and

birthdays. Please reach out for prayer requests or any other question or concern. deacons@overbrookpresb.org or Terri Hunter, teresahunter42@gmail.com or by phone, 484-684-0247.

Spiritual Support

Pastor Adam Hearlson is available via phone, email and Zoom for "face to face" conversations during this challenging time. His email is adam@overbrookpresb.org, or you can reach out via the church phone 215-877-2744 and he will return the message.

Prayer List

- Sabrina Johnson's stepdad is battling COVID-19 and double pneumonia.
- Terri Hunter's sister and brother-in-law who are both suffering from COVID-19.
- Ken Carroll recovering from cataract surgery, grateful for all prayers
- Marita Patino Treat Rosen- prayers for chronic pain relief
- Bob Kaercher's brother's rotator cuff surgery went well, needs PT for a few months
- Jackie McKeithan, family friend of Artia Benjamin, is now in hospice care
- Margaret Young's son Keith remains under medical treatment but is no longer on hospice care.
- Chris Gage's parents, Nancy and Wayne Gage.
- Lynn Pompa continued prayers are needed for medical complications.
- Mary Pat, friend of Ginny Leagans, is being treated for colon cancer and just started chemotherapy.
- Theresa Carter is currently being treated for metastatic breast cancer and her tumor is shrinking.
- Amanda Benjamin is seeking employment after being recently laid off.
- Kim Bridgford, friend of Holly Brigham, has passed away after battling stage four breast cancer. Prayers for her family and close friends.
- Caroline Skinner is facing health challenges (still waiting for a kidney, happy to get a shawl)
- Dale, friend of the Kupstas's family, is awaiting test results and diagnosis of a current illness. Dale is a father of 3 children.
- Judy Swartz prayers for continued healing.
- Al Mayne, father of Scott Mayne, has just completed cancer treatment and is recovering from surgery.
- Eric Long's father Bill Long's cancer has returned.
- Wendy Fraser, sister of Jeremy Blatchley, is continuing treatment for cancer.
- Ed Harvey is still facing some multiple health challenges. He is grateful for all the prayers.

Please contact Terri Hunter (teresahunter42@gmail.com) or the Church Office to add names to the prayer list.

Weekly Opportunities

- ♦ Tuesday Women's Prayer & Support Group, 7:30 a.m.
- ♦ Wednesday Morning Bible Study- 10:30 am
- ♦ Thursday Vigil for Racial Justice, 2:00 pm-Dusk
- ♦ Saturday Morning Men's' Group, 9:00 am

For more information or links to these opportunities please visit our website at www.overbrookpresb.org

THURSDAY VIGIL

Please note on Christmas Eve, and New Year's Eve 2020, the Vigil for Racial Justice will take place from 11am-noon. Participants are welcome to stay longer if they desire, but sign-ups will be for that one hour of the morning.

Prayer and Care Team

Prayer and Care Team Invitations

The Prayer and Care Team invites you to allow us...

...to serve YOU! If you are in need of food assistance during these challenging times, either due to medical precautions or financial need, please let us know and we will deliver Prayer and Care groceries to you home. Each bag contains meal support for 3-4 days, and includes fresh produce, meat and dairy products, as well as canned and packaged foods. For those who prefer to make their own food selections, grocery cards can be provided. Since March, over 320 grocery deliveries have been made, and numerous grocery cards have been provided. These gifts are freely given, made possible by generous contributions to the OPC Emergency Fund.

...to welcome YOU! If you are looking for an area of personal ministry during this time of separation, please know that the Prayer and Care Team welcomes you to serve with us. Following the guidelines of the CDC and the City of Philadelphia, we provide independent opportunities to maintain phone contact with recipients, shop, deliver groceries to doorsteps, and offer ongoing prayer for those in need.

If you would like to receive a delivery, make a delivery possible for others, or volunteer to be part of the Prayer and Care Team, please contact Sharon Parker (sparker614@gmail.com; home phone: 2687-292-5628)

Blessings to all, The Prayer and Care Team

Prayer and Care Holiday Food Ministry

OPC Turkey Trot: On November 21, ten Thanksgiving turkeys and bags of "fixings" flew out of the building and landed on the doorstep of welcoming families. Abundant appreciation goes to all of the OPC shoppers, packers, donors, and trotters who made "the trot" possible.

OPC Ham-ble on Down the Road: Let's continue to put our "grocery points" to good use! If you find your household is accumulating enough points for a free ham or a free turkey that you don't need, please let the Prayer and Care Team know and we will find a good home for those delicacies. Likewise, if you would like to adopt a turkey or ham holiday meal...let us know. We deliver! The Prayer and Care Team will "ham-ble on down the road" during the week of December 20. Please contact Sharon Parker (sparker614@gmail.com; home phone : 267-292-5628) with donations and requests.



Emergency Fund

The OPC Emergency Fund remains available for those in our community experiencing acute financial needs. Over the past several months, we have been able to help defray the costs of rent, car repairs, utility bills and other essential living expenses.

To reach the Emergency Fund, email: emergencyfund@overbrookpresb.org. You can also call the main church number, 215-877-2744, to leave a message. Or contact any member of the Emergency Fund committee: Nancy Gilhool, Will Schick, Herb Brabham, Sharon Parker or Pastor Adam Hearlson.