

Issue 2:  
Advent, 2016

# FPC Faith in Action

*News of First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hills, NY*

*"But the  
angel said  
to them:  
'Do not be  
afraid. I  
bring you  
good  
news'"*

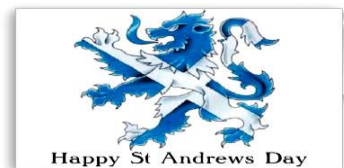
Our next issue is scheduled to be published in February. If you have a news item to contribute, or would like to write for the FPC-FIA, send an e-mail to Lois Anne DeLong at [betwink13@optonline.net](mailto:betwink13@optonline.net), or to church administrator David Barnett at [presbyfh@nyc.twcbc.com](mailto:presbyfh@nyc.twcbc.com). Copy deadline for submitting news items to the February issue will be January 22, and for submitting complete articles will be January 29.

Note that additional information on many of these events can be found at Pastor Jack Lohr's church blog post at <http://presbyfh.blogspot.com/> or the church web site at <http://www.presbyfh.org/>.

Luke 2:  
100:1-2a.

## **Getting Ready: Thoughts on Entering Advent**

*by Jack Lohr, Pastor*



How are you getting ready for Christmas? One practice to consider is daily Scripture and prayer. You can find a resource on the Vanderbilt University website: <http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/daily.php?year=A> Another site for daily prayer is Shane Claiborne's Common Prayer: <http://commonprayer.net/>

As I write this, it is St. Andrew's Day (November 30). He is considered the patron saint of Cyprus, Scotland, Greece, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, San Andres Island (Colombia) and Saint Andrew Parish

(Barbados). According to tradition, when St. Andrew was martyred he asked to be killed on a cross in the shape of an "X," as he did not feel worthy to die on the same type of cross as Jesus. This "X", known as the St. Andrew's cross, is symbolized on the Scottish Flag.

In the midst of apocalyptic fears, we can hold on to God's promise in today's reading from Isaiah:

*"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed."*

Americans of Scottish descent in the United States sometimes celebrate a "Kirkin' o' the Tartans"

service around St. Andrew's Day. This observance originated with Peter Marshall, then chaplain of the US Senate, who created the service in 1943 to raise funds for war relief in Great Britain. A

### **Advent at a Glance**

**Christmas Potluck & Pageant,**  
*Sun., Dec. 18, 12:15 p.m.*

**Christmas Eve Service**  
*Sat., Dec. 24 at 8 p.m.*

*A service of candlelight and carols*

**Christmas Day**  
*Sun. Dec. 25 at 11 a.m.*  
*Celebrating the birth of the Christ Child by  
sharing songs and stories of celebrations  
past*

Kirkin' service continues to be held annually in the National Cathedral in Washington D.C.  
(<http://cathedral.org/event/choral-evensong-kirkin-o-tartan/>)

May God bless us as we follow our own traditions, and perhaps expand some practices, as we prepare for Christmas and a deeper discipleship with Jesus.

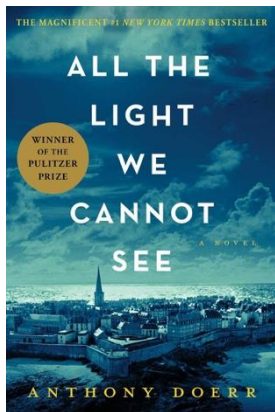
### **Fall Brings New Programs, New Ideas to the Church**

Fall is a time of renewal, as we emerge from the heat and easy living of the summer and head "back to school," either literally or metaphorically. This year, fall at FPC meant the arrival of some new activities and some re-thinking about one of our church's most successful initiatives.

#### ***Book Club Offers Inspiration and Food for Thought***

*by Janice Lohr*

The newly formed Book Club has met twice to date, attracting about 10 to 12 people at each session. For October, we read a WWII novel, *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr. Our discussion in November was about *The Snow Child* by Eowyn Ivey, which was set in



Alaska in the 1920s. Both of these titles have been honored with some of the literary community's highest awards.

Our December meeting was actually held the last day in November. Ten people braved the rainy and windy weather to discuss *The Sellout* by Paul Beatty, a novel described by one reviewer as "a biting satire about a young man's isolated upbringing and the race trial that sends him to the Supreme Court." The book is the first work by an African-American author to win the distinguished Man Booker Prize.

Titles have been chosen for the first two meetings of the new year. We'll meet on January 4, 2017, to talk about *We Are Not Ourselves* by Matthew Thomas. This story of three generations of an Irish-American family is a title that should be available at your local library. We will meet at the manse at 7 p.m. and the Lohrs will provide refreshments.

For our February meeting we will read *A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman, described on Amazon as the story of "a grumpy yet loveable man who finds his solitary world turned on its head when a boisterous young family moves in next door." This book currently is on a wait list at the library. If you would like Jack to order you a copy, please let him know by December 11. The cost will be \$9.00.

Other titles on the list for 2017:

*The Little Paris Bookshop* by Nina George

*The Elegance of the Hedgehog* by Muriel Barbery

*The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini

All are welcome to join us.

#### ***Share the Care: Dreaming Big, Acting in a Larger Context***

*by Melinda Lackey*

What exciting stories will we be telling in five years about the difference that our Care Crew has made in the community?

To explore these possibilities, I've been leading the church in a series of visioning and planning activities. As a first step, Alba, Bruno, David, Ellen, Helen, Herndon, Jack, Karl, Lois, Martha, Michelle, and myself shared dreams online. Then on Sunday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, most of the

congregation stayed for a visioning exercise after worship. At this time, we shared Ideas for both specific projects and for new paths to explore as we seek to expand what one person described as our “incredible web of love and support.”

One idea that all agreed was worth building on was to team up with other congregations and community organizations, both to hear the stories of their outreach initiatives and to identify issues we could work on together. Towards this end, we invited representatives from St. Luke’s, the Church-in-the-Gardens, the Reformed Temple, Forestdale, and the Queens Community House to dream with us, on Sunday, October 23. While only a representative from Queens Community House could attend that day, it still was valuable to hear a bit more about both the needs of our community and how another group is seeking to meet those needs.

As we move forward, there is one thing we know for sure: Our members, friends, and the residents of Forest View will continue to experience the love of our Care Crew. We envision a central leadership team coordinating a growing network of individuals, other churches and local community groups engaged in a variety of ways, all extending God's love within and beyond the walls of the Church. We also hope to assist three or four other congregations to launch care crews of their own.

Perhaps our church will become known for the quality of our love and caring?  
All inputs are welcome. You can join the conversation by e-mailing me at [mklackey@seedimpact.org](mailto:mklackey@seedimpact.org).

### ***Christian Meditation Takes Flight***

In the last issue of this newsletter, we previewed this new program that explores an ancient Christian practice that is now experiencing a bit of a renaissance. Since then, the group has been meeting each Tuesday, from 7-8 pm. Here are some words from the group’s co-leader, Melinda Lackey.

YOU are invited to Christian Meditation.

What is it? Christian meditation is a simple practice of silence and stillness, contemplation, and being with God. John Main in *Being On the Way* explains: “It is about turning our lives around so



that they are wholly focused within the consciousness of Jesus. This is what it is to enter eternal life, [the Kingdom].” Laurence Freeman explains in *Jesus the Teacher Within*, “As this transformation process unfolds, relationship with Jesus deepens. Faith deepens .... qualities we thought ourselves incapable of—patience, empathy, compassion, tolerance—develop in our character and behavior.”

We meet in the Sanctuary. All our welcome to practice in community with us to learn the techniques. Then you’ll be encouraged to meditate on your own, once or twice daily.

### **New Organ Christened by Three Superior Organists**

While our organist and choir director, David J. Yurick, has been making beautiful music with the new church organ since early Fall, the instrument was officially dedicated with a concert on November 5. In addition to Yurick, the church invited Terence Flanagan, director of music at the First Presbyterian Church of Mount Kisco, NY, and Daniel Ficarri, an organ scholar at The Church of St. Paul the Apostle in Manhattan.

The concert included performances of the following pieces:

***Daniel Ficarri***

Imperial March, Op. 32	Edward Elgar
Prelude and Fugue in A Minor, BWV 543	J. S. Bach
Final from Organ Sonata No. 1, Op. 42	Alexandre
Guilmant	

***Terence Flanagan***

Trio Sonata I, BWV 525	J. S. Bach
(Allegro Moderato, Adagio, Allegro)	
Prélude, Fugue and Variation, Op. 18	César Franck
Variations on "America"	Charles Ives

***David Yurick***

Prelude and Fugue in E Minor, BWV 533	J.S. Bach
Chorale Prelude on "Rejoice Now, Dear Christians"	J.S. Bach
Suite for a Musical Clock	G.F. Handel
Berceuse	Louis Vierne
Symphony No. 6 (first movement)	Charles Marie Widor



(L to R) Ficarri, Yurick, and Flanagan

### **Giving Thanks, Giving Back**

On Sunday, November 20, our Stewardship campaign came to an end with a service of Thanksgiving for our many blessing, and a pre-Thanksgiving lunch that featured turkey and all the trimmings. God has truly been good to this congregation and it appears that many of us are eager to give back. The early returns (from that Sunday only) showed that seven new families completed pledges, and combined pledges were up 15% over last year. The response has been amazing! So far, we have \$79,790.00 pledged for 2017. Thank you!

We thank all who made the leap of faith by pledging for the first time, or increasing their planned giving.



