

# The Homepage

Serving the communities of

Greater Hazelwood • Greenfield • 31st Ward • New Homestead • The Run



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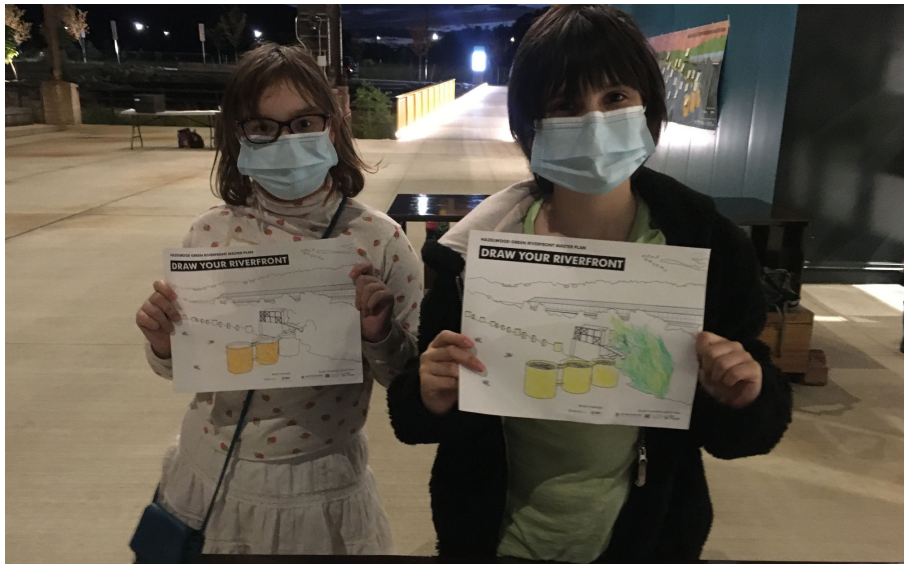
December 2020

## Hazelwood Riverfront Master Planning Project Underway

By Hazelwood Green Riverfront  
Master Planning Team

More than 150 Greater Hazelwood residents, ranging from middle schoolers to lifelong residents, recently shared their hopes and desires for improving the 1.3 mile stretch of land alongside the Monongahela River in Hazelwood. Their contributions—collected through neighborhood surveys and a collaborative public workshop at Mill 19 in October—were gathered as part of the Hazelwood Green Riverfront Master Plan Project, which aims to produce a design that will, for the first time in more than 100 years, open the riverfront to the public.

The planning process, which began earlier this year, is grounded in a commitment by Almono (the property owners) to make this former brownfield land along the river accessible, open, and welcoming



Hazelwood residents share their ideas for the riverfront.

Photo: Amy Camp

to all. The property included in the scope of the Riverfront Master Plan covers approximately 21 acres and, as it extends along the Mon, varies in width ranging from 55 to 200 feet. Its terrain is varied, from areas that are flat and open to sections that drop steeply down to the river. The land is bordered on one side by

an active railroad track and, on the other, the Monongahela River, with views of Hays Woods, the South Side and the downtown Pittsburgh skyline just beyond.

Project Advisory Committee member, JaQuay Carter, who grew up in Hazelwood, uses trails around the city and is looking forward to river-

front improvements. He says, “Being able to get closer to the river—to be able to walk, exercise, and have a tranquil experience—would be awesome,” adding, “I’m hoping residents can soon access the river in a safe and environmentally friendly manner.”

Among the riverfront’s most notable features are the historic structures that are physical reminders of Hazelwood’s industrial past, and the workers who toiled at the mills that once fueled Hazelwood’s—and Pittsburgh’s—economy. These include a Pump House, mooring cells, platforms, coal loaders and catwalks. Incorporating community recommendations and input, the Riverfront Master Plan Project will create a design approach that showcases and preserves these wonderful and iconic remaining industrial

*Continued on Page Four*

## Propel Family Support Team Assists Families at School and Home

By Rachel Sonnet

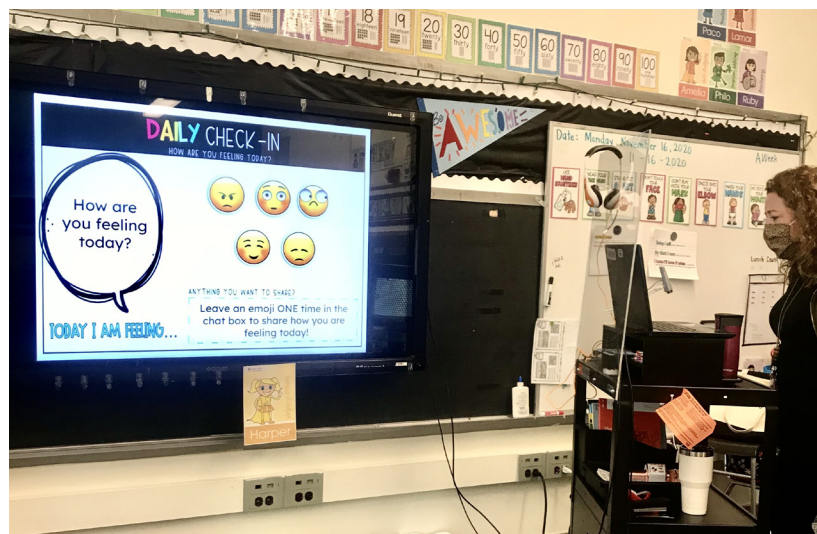
This fall, Propel Hazelwood focused its efforts on supporting our scholar's physical, emotional, and academic needs through virtual and hybrid learning. The Support Staff Team collaborated to make sure all scholars were ready to learn. The Support Staff Team consists of the School Counselor, Ms. Lacey Macchia, UPMC Prevention Specialist, Ms. Loni Gooden, Student Support Specialist, Mr. Justin Peeks, and Community Site Coordinator, Ms. Rachel Sonnet.

During the academic year, Ms. Macchia and Ms. Gooden worked together to strengthen our scholars' emotional skills. They checked in with scholars to discuss day-to-day events or gave them tools to thrive in more complex situations. They also lead lessons for all grades with topics including self-reflection, mindfulness, and social skills. Beyond

being a consistent role model for our scholars, Student Support Specialist Mr. Peeks distributed two surveys that checked on scholars' well-being and allowed them to identify their positive and negative feelings. These survey results helped him identify the specific academic and social interventions for scholars.

Educators know that when schol-

ars have their physical needs met, they are more likely to succeed academically. Through partnerships with other organizations, we have given families a little extra peace of mind. Thanks to donations from the Holy Cross Lutheran Church and Vicar Hasselbrook, we have helped over ten families with uniforms. Adagio Health provided water bot-



Ms. Muldowney checks in on her virtual second grade scholars' feelings.

tles and jump ropes for our scholars to have safe ways to stay hydrated and energized. The Center of Life donated books to help supplement our scholars' libraries at home and school. Reverend June Jeffries led a Because We Care donation campaign and collected 25 grocery gift cards to help families prepare for the holiday season.

During this hybrid protocol educators partnered with families regularly, from helping with technology to being a friendly ear. Families and educators communicated more openly and honestly. Some educators even instituted daily check-ins with their scholars on their feelings. Ms. Muldowney, a second-grade educator, took time every morning to have virtual and in-person scholars share emojis that described their feelings. Through this unpredictable school year, staff and scholars have

*Continued on Page Five*

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Greenfield · Hazelwood · Lincoln Place · Hays · New Homestead

*The Homepage is published by the Hazelwood Initiative, Inc., a community based non-profit, and is made possible thanks to advertising revenue from local business and organizations.*

## Editor

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The Homepage encourages all residents of Hazelwood, Greenfield, Glen Hazel, Glenwood, Hays, New Homestead, and Lincoln Place, along with those who have an interest in these communities, to use this paper as a platform to promote resources, events, services, and community initiatives to further connect and strengthen their neighborhoods.

The Homepage reserves the right to decide what content is appropriate for publication and may edit submissions for length or form. The opinions expressed, whether by paid advertisement or editorial content, do not necessarily reflect the views of this newspaper, the Hazelwood Initiative, Inc., the Greenfield Community Association, nor the 31st Ward Community Action Group.

Email your letters to:  
editor@hazelwoodinitiative.org



## Our Mission Statement

The mission of the Hazelwood Initiative, as a community based development corporation, is to build a stronger Hazelwood through inclusive community development.

# Hazelwood Initiative Board Elections 2020

By Gerri Tipton

Hazelwood Initiative's board elections are coming up, and an array of qualified candidates are set to run for a position. Below is a short bio about each candidate and the goals they'd like to achieve if chosen.

## Amber Rooke



My name is Amber Rooke. I have been both a renter and a homeowner in Hazelwood for the past nine years, and have experienced just a few of the difficulties renters encounter here. Through getting to know neighbors and volunteering in different capacities, I have seen the unique need for advocacy on behalf of renters and the many hurdles of achieving homeownership. I hope to continue to advocate on behalf of renters and maintaining affordable housing in the Greater Hazelwood area.

## Angelo Vaughn



My name is Angelo Vaughn. I am 25 years old and have lived in Hazelwood for 25 years. I live right on Second Avenue close to St. Paul's church. From a young age, I participated in many of the community events that still exist in Hazelwood today, such as Safe Halloween and Light Up Night, but also things that we've not seen for a while such as the Bazaar at St. Stephen's. I was an employee at the Latino Family Center that was once located above Cribs for Kids. There I helped Pittsburgh's growing Latino community become acclimated to life in the United States. Hazelwood Initiative is about "development without displacement" and I want to look for ways to help educate people, from children to adults, about what they need to become homeowners and about the many resources that are available to them before and after they become one. What I want for our neighborhood is for anyone in Hazelwood that wants to stay in Hazelwood has what they need to pursue that goal, and I believe that Hazelwood Initiative is the best way for me to see that happen.

## Mikal Merlina



My wife Sarah, our 2 daughters and I have been proud residents of Hazelwood since 2016. I'm a PA-licensed realtor with over 20 years of experience in sales and consulting. I've had the privilege of helping members of our community purchase their own homes and have assisted others, excited to become part of the community. I enjoy spending time with my family, outside if possible, often clearing vines and picking up the leftovers of long-gone homes that once surrounded ours. Sarah and I have volunteered to deliver meals on wheels for Fishes and Loaves when time permitted. I hope that my professional and personal experience will be an asset to the Hazelwood Initiative as it continues its mission of protecting and growing affordable housing in the neighborhood.

## Rena Halsel



My name is Rena Halsel and I have lived in Hazelwood since 1992. My husband Mark and I live on East Elizabeth Street. In 1996, I started Hazelwood Football and Cheerleading Organization. We also launched 4 other programs: Girl Pride, The Culinary Program, Sewing Club and the Black History program. I am the proud owner of MoNae's Hair Studio and Barbering, New 2 You store, and the Diamond Room located at 4944 2nd Avenue at Elevationz. As a board member of the Hazelwood Initiative I would like to be a part of the positive change and the development of the community. I want to help develop entrepreneur programs for those that have the desire and willing to do so.

# COVID-19: Greater Hazelwood Food Distribution

Center of Life	Delivering prepared meals Monday – Friday from 11am – 1pm 412-521-3468
Community Delivery Hotline	Grocery delivery 412-568-3579
Fishes and Loaves	Prepared meals available for pick-up Monday - Friday from 11:30am – 1pm Meals-on-Wheels also available for meal deliveries 131 E Elizabeth – St. Stephens Pastoral Center 412-499-4313
Holy Cross Evangelical-Lutheran	Fresh and non-perishable food offered for free everyday 412-521-0844 / 5319 Second Ave (Opens 9:30am)
POORLAW	For Glen Hazel residents - poorlaw@gmail.com 412-670-8421 or 412-478-8299
Praise Temple Deliverance Church	For Glenwood residents 5400 Glenwood Ave 412-277-0113

## Hotlines, Alerts, & General Information

**Allegheny County Health Dept.**  
24/7 hotline:  
888-856-2774

**Center of Life**  
Covid-19 Online Resource Guide  
centeroflifeonline.net/covid

**Phone Alerts:**  
www.alleghenycounty.us/alerts

**Hazelwood Initiative Community Updates**  
facebook.com/hazelwoodinitiative

**General Information & Assistance:**  
Call 2-1-1  
OR text your zip code to 898-211  
OR visit PA211sw.org

**Praise Temple Community Hotline**  
\*Answering M-F, 10am-2pm  
Messages returned next day  
412-422-1983

## Houses of Worship

**Church of the Good Shepherd**  
124 Johnston Avenue  
Pittsburgh, 15207  
412-421-8497  
hazelwoodgoodshepherd@gmail.com  
www.hazelwoodgoodshepherd.org

**Mary S. Brown-Ames United Methodist Church**  
\*During construction of new building -  
**Temporarily meeting at:**  
515 West 8th Avenue  
Homestead, PA 15120  
412-421-4431  
info@brightredfence.org  
www.brightredfence.org

**Holy Cross Evangelical  
Lutheran Chapel**  
5319 Second Avenue  
Pittsburgh, 15207  
412-521-0844  
www.holycrosspgh.info

**First Hungarian Reformed Church  
of Pittsburgh**  
221 Johnston Avenue  
Pittsburgh, 15207  
412-421-0279

**Praise Temple Deliverance Church**  
5400 Glenwood Avenue  
Pittsburgh, 15207  
412-277-0113

**St. Rosalia's Catholic Church**  
411 Greenfield Avenue  
Pittsburgh, 15207  
412-421-5766  
strosaliaparish@gmail.com  
www.strosaliaparish.org

**Holy Angels Parish**  
408 Baldwin Road  
Pittsburgh, 15207  
412-461-6906  
www.holyangelshays.org

**Squirrel Hill Christian Church**  
290 Bigelow Street  
Pittsburgh, 15207  
412-521-2447  
www.squirrelhillcc.wixsite.com

**St. Stephen Catholic Church**  
5115 Second Avenue  
Pittsburgh, 15207  
412-421-9210  
saintstephen@verizon.net  
www.ststephen-hazelwood.org

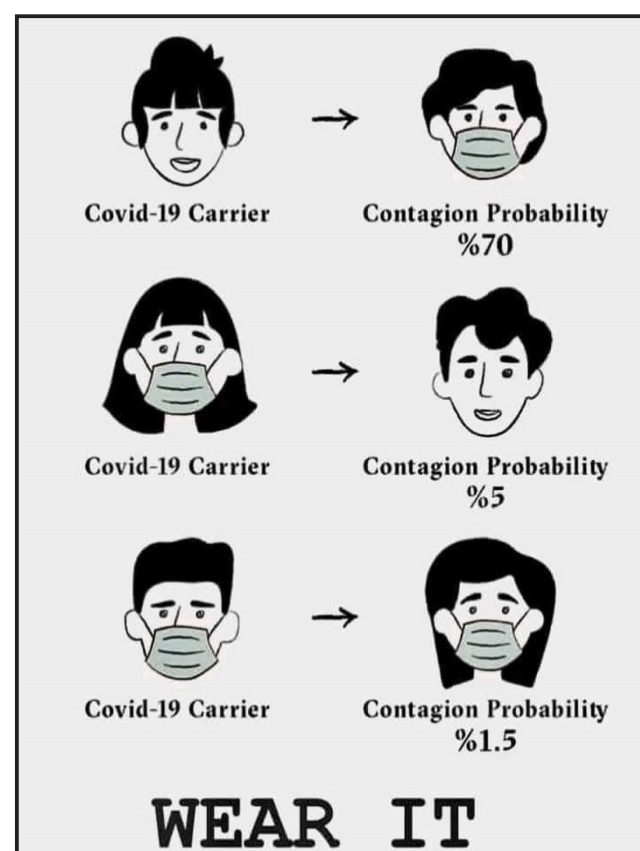
**Keystone Church of Hazelwood**  
161 Hazelwood Avenue  
Pittsburgh, 15207  
412-521-3468

**St. John the Evangelist Baptist**  
4537 Chatsworth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, 15207  
412-521-0994  
info@stjohnpgh.org  
www.stjohnpgh.org

**Warriors of Holiness in Power  
(W.H.I.P. Ministries)**  
1174 Mifflin Road  
Pittsburgh, 15207  
412-461-5572  
whipwarriors@gmail.com  
www.whipministries.org

**Morningstar Baptist Church**  
5524 Second Avenue  
Pittsburgh, 15207  
412-421-6269

**Fountain of Life Church**  
247 Johnston Ave  
Pittsburgh, 15207  
412-422-8794  
www.fountainoflifepgh.com



## "Just For Today" Nar-Anon Family Group Meeting



**Wednesdays at 6:30 PM**  
First Hungarian Reformed Church – Calvin Hall  
221 Johnston Avenue  
Contact Cindy at 412 421 7076

If you have a loved one, family member or friend that suffers from the disease of addiction, these meetings are for you.

# Hazelwood Riverfront Project - Continued from Front Page

structures. The plan will also reveal views of the river and provide accessible spaces for recreation, relaxation, and socializing.

## Public Engagement an Early Part of the Planning Process

The master plan project got underway earlier this year when the project's consulting team, led by Pittsburgh-based Environmental Planning & Design (EPD), compiled data on the site to understand its potential opportunities and challenges, including those posed by the physical condition of existing structures. An advisory committee made up of neighborhood, city, regional and site representatives was formed to lend guidance to the design process, which officially kicked off with the team reaching out to the public to gather perspective on what is most important to the community. Beginning in September, the team collected nearly 400 online and paper survey responses (from the neighborhood as well as other city residents) that have provided direct feedback on the features and amenities that are priorities for people in the neighborhood and the city. Surveys continue to be collected and can be accessed online at [www.hazelwoodgreen.com/riverfront](http://www.hazelwoodgreen.com/riverfront) (a virtual site tour can be found at this location with an option to take a survey at the end of the tour).

EPD also hosted a three-day collaborative workshop during which they gathered public input, then took those ideas and incorporated them into a first-round design that was shared on the second day. Reactions to that first set of designs in turn guided the team in developing an updated set of designs that were shared during the concluding presentation on the third day. With many ideas shared, the design team is currently looking at the design features and amenities that were most popular with the workshop participants, and to those that have and continue to weigh in and complete surveys regarding the project. These priorities will be incorporated into the next stage of the Riverfront Master Plan, which will be presented to the public in the winter/early spring 2021.

## Propel Hazelwood Students Share Their Hopes for the Riverfront

One particularly encouraging part of the project thus far has been hearing from Propel Hazelwood 6th – 8th grade students, about 20 percent of whom reported living in Greater Hazelwood. A Propel representative worked with the project team to administer a survey to the students. Ideas and input were gathered from 60 students, and the project team was encouraged by what they shared. The students were asked a number of questions, including: "What one thing would you like to see along the Hazelwood Green riverfront?" Many of the students were thoughtful with their insights, with responses saying that they would like, "to see people having fun playing, dancing, singing, and eating," "for teachers to have [a place to have] a picnic with their students," and "to go fishing with my family and friends." The students generally demonstrated that they would like to be able to enjoy the water, and are looking for places to relax, play, connect with nature, and meet up with their friends. Propel Hazelwood has requested that the project team speak with the students about the survey results to reinforce their learning and demonstrate how their feedback contributed to the planning process.

## Ways to be Involved

If you missed the chance to take the survey, you can still weigh in by reaching out to the project team at [epd@epd-pgh.com](mailto:epd@epd-pgh.com). You can also take the above-mentioned virtual site tour, available at [www.hazelwoodgreen.com/riverfront](http://www.hazelwoodgreen.com/riverfront). The tour brings you close to the industrial structures that remain on the site, shows some of the features of the land, and ends with the opportunity to take a brief survey. Please also stay posted for an announcement about other opportunities to weigh in on the plan this winter and learn more about the project when EPD presents an update at Hazelwood Initiative's January community-wide meeting. The plan will be completed in 2021.

*The Riverfront Master Plan Project is made possible through a Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) grant to the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, as well as matching funds from Almono.*



Hazelwood resident Tevin Jordan Blair (right) gives feedback on the riverfront.

**Do you have thoughts, questions, or concerns about Hazelwood's riverfront?**

Contact Environmental Planning & Design: (412) 261-6000



Hazelwood's current view of the Monongahela River.

**FISHES & LOAVES**  
**congregate**  
**LUNCH** 

At St. Stephen's Pastoral Center  
 131 E Elizabeth St. Pittsburgh, PA 15207

**now open  
 for take out  
 meals!**

**MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY**  
**11:30 AM TO 1 PM**

Free and open to the public

# Propel Family Support - Continued from Front Page

shown compassion and understanding. As the academic year progresses, the Support Staff Team will continue to update its website with school and community information. You can find the site at <https://sites.google.com/propelschools.org/propelhazelwood/home>



Donated books sorted and ready to distribute to educators and scholars.



**Early Head Start**  
 Accepting Applications · 412-431-4339

**Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center**  
 kindergarten readiness begins at birth · serving families with children ages 0-3



## Mark McKinley, Jr.

By Andrea Coleman

In the hustle of holiday cheer—thinking about the changes and memories here in the Greater Hazelwood Community and in maneuvering through this journey called Life—I have come across some residents within. Some young, old, and older. I am now on the older end but when I come across the young people I have known over the years, and how they are now on their own journey, and moving on to old or older (“fork in the road”), I stop to ask, “How have you been?” or “How are you doing?” Questions that care and share information and knowledge, and today Mark answers the questions for me and for you.



Mark McKinley, Jr.

age everyone I encounter not to give up and keep moving forward and reminding them they matter! I am an example of what's possible and can/will happen with a plan and direction. I am implementing practices to continuously inform my community of the social/economic climate around them and how to maintain the ‘Hazelwood’ they grew up in... loving and belonging.”

As for the future, he adds, “I will increase my footprint in the community teaching financial literacy and financial tools and how they also matter. I will help as many people that will be willing to learn, and have hopes of teaching the people in the community the importance of their participation in the future of Hazelwood. Yes, the future rests with the people of Hazelwood.”

In conclusion Mark says, “The residents of Hazelwood make Hazelwood the jewel it has become. The residents must ‘take ownership’ of their community with their finances and participation and giv-

ing to the generations to come to the community that they were allotted to by those before them, while sharing a clear and inclusive path for a prosperous future of the Hazelwood they love, becoming the change they wish to see!”

Thank you, Mark, for your sharing “You” with the Hazelwood you Love. You make us Hazelwood Proud!



**FISHES & LOAVES**  
cooperative ministries

Hazelwood-Greenfield Meals on Wheels  
 412.499.4313  
 Volunteer | Sign Up | Learn More  
[fishes-and-loaves-hazelwood.org](http://fishes-and-loaves-hazelwood.org)



# 31<sup>ST</sup> WARD WIRE

Lincoln Place • Gates Manor  
Hays • New Homestead



## Our Mission:

The 31<sup>st</sup> Ward Community Action Group was established to bring the residents of our community together, advocate for the neighborhoods' needs, and to support the youth, veterans, and senior citizens of the 31<sup>st</sup> Ward and surrounding areas.

## 31<sup>st</sup> Ward Churches



**Holy Angels Parish**  
408 Baldwin Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15207  
412-461-6906  
www.holyangelsshays.org

**Lincoln Place Church of the Nazarene**  
5604 Interboro Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15207  
412-462-2524  
www.ipnaz.org

**Lincoln Place Presbyterian Church**  
1202 Muldowney Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15207  
412-461-3377

**Mt. Rise Baptist Church**  
80 Ingot Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15120  
412-462-8333

**Maoz Tzur - Rock of Ages Messianic Jewish Congregation at Lincoln Place Church of the Nazarene**  
5604 Interboro Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15207  
412-609-1117

**St. John the Baptist Byzantine Cathedral**  
210 Greentree Road  
Munhall, PA 15120  
412-461-0944

**Warriors of Holiness in Power (W.H.I.P. Ministries)**  
1174 Mifflin Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15207  
412-461-5571

## 31<sup>st</sup> Ward CAG Corner

Join us for community planning and events, discussion of current concerns and goals, as well as updates from Zone 4 Police, the Office of Councilman O'Connor, and the Mayor's Office

Lincoln Presbyterian Church,  
1202 Muldowney Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15207

\*Monthly meetings every 2nd Tuesday at 7 PM  
Social Hall of LP Presbyterian Church.  
Enter on Cooley Way

### Contact us:

Email: [executiveboard@31WardCag.org](mailto:executiveboard@31WardCag.org) Website: [31stwardcag.org](http://31stwardcag.org) Find us on Facebook!



## 31<sup>st</sup> Ward Flag Fund

Your donation will help our volunteers to install and maintain American flags that line the streets of the 31<sup>st</sup> Ward.

Please make checks payable to the **31<sup>st</sup> Ward Community Action Group** and mail to 944 Sunglow St, Munhall, PA 15120. Include a return mailing address if you would like a receipt of your donation.

Send a donation via Venmo to @Pgh31stWardCAG  
[www.venmo.com/Pgh31stWardCAG](http://www.venmo.com/Pgh31stWardCAG)



## Holy Angels Parish

Tuesday - 8:00 AM  
Thursday - 8:00 AM  
Friday - 8:00 AM  
Saturday - 8:00 AM  
Saturday Vigil - 6:00 AM  
Sunday - 9:30 AM  
Confession: Saturdays after 8am 'til 9am

## Lincoln Place Presbyterian Church

Sunday Worship Service - 9:30 AM  
Monday - NA's 7:00 PM  
Tuesday - Senior Lunch & more 12:00-2:00 PM  
For more info call: 412-461-3377

## Lincoln Place Church of the Nazarene

Sunday School (all ages) - 9:30 AM  
Children's Church - 10:30 AM  
Morning Worship - 10:30 AM  
Evening Service - 6:30 PM

Monthly food pantry - 3rd Saturday (8:30 AM)  
at Lincoln Place Presbyterian

Need a ride to church?  
Call Darrel at 412-461-6742

# City of Pittsburgh Releases First Voluntary Local Review of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Press Release

Mayor William Peduto has announced the release of the City of Pittsburgh's first Voluntary Local Review (VLR) of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 2019, the City of Pittsburgh became the second city in the country to formally integrate the SDGs into city operations, best practices and goals. The SDGs are 17 universal goals to eradicate poverty, protect the planet and improve the quality of life for every human being. Mayor Peduto was joined by public, private and nonprofit partners, who pledged their support and made similar commitments for their organizations.

First developed in New York City, a VLR is a local government's assessment of progress towards the individual targets of the SDGs. Pittsburgh's VLR was developed and conducted in the summer and fall of 2020 to focus on city government operations. Data was collected through examining city reports, reviewing online surveys and hosting discussions with city and authority personnel to determine how the City's existing work aligns with individual SDGs.

The report classifies city work, projects and initiatives under each SDG outcome to produce an understanding of what work is contributing to what outcome. This also helps to identify opportunities for inter-department and cross-sector partnerships as multiple departments or organizations may be working toward common goals. The City will use this periodic report to hold itself accountable to its work and operations supporting the SDGs and measure its progress towards achieving the SDGs.

"Today we release our first VLR, another step towards a continuous

cycle of improvement to create a culture of measurement and accountability within city government," Mayor Peduto said. "We will align our work to the SDGs to make sure that our efforts are always working towards the 17 common goals that improve life for all of our residents: goals such as no poverty, zero hunger, reduced inequalities, good health and wellbeing. We hope this will provide a blueprint model for other organizations and industries within our region to join us in measuring their work against the SDGs. We will have a greater impact when we all work together."

"It's fantastic that Pittsburgh is joining the global movement of cities who are publishing their progress towards the SDGs," said Alexandra Hiniker, the current Executive Fellow for Sustainability Initiatives at Carnegie Mellon University who previously worked for the City of New York and helped develop the first VLR. "When I created the concept of the VLR in 2018, I knew it would only be successful if cities around the world participated."

Collectively achieving the SDGs by 2030 in Pittsburgh will require cooperation and participation of external partners to create strategies for implementing the SDGs to improve outcomes for all residents in the region. The City is partnering with nonprofits, universities and philanthropies to align internal and external efforts toward ensuring a thriving Pittsburgh for all, with the VLR serving as a periodic report card on the progress.

One such partner is Coro Pittsburgh, whose Executive Director Selena Schmidt said, "Thanks to the City of Pittsburgh's leadership to develop a VLR, Coro can incorporate these goals and measures as baselines to enhance our capacity build-

ing work with all of our nonprofit, private sector, innovation, and government partners—expanding the reach of the SDGs as a framework for collective impact."

Coro Pittsburgh and other external partners like The Forbes Funds are revising their business models and processes to position their organizations to lead this work. Fred Brown, President and CEO of The Forbes Funds explained, "As an intermediary foundation, The Forbes Funds continues to align our work to the SDGs to not only address the inequities within our region, but to innovate and empower the nonprofit sector to play a role in driving solutions. The City of Pittsburgh has made notable internal progress toward each of the 17 goals; however, we know that this global work requires a network of local partners to support the most resilient communities and populations in our region."

Adopting the SDGs and conducting the VLR demonstrates Pittsburgh's leadership in thinking global and acting local. It connects our communities throughout the region by promoting equitable and resilient solutions for all while also plugging Pittsburgh into a global support network of cities looking to lead the way to a sustainable future.

"We are witnessing one more great American city join a growing global movement grounding this extremely relevant agenda locally. Together with the citizens of Pittsburgh, local stakeholders, including Carnegie Mellon and other universities, local NGOs, the private sector, and city government, this collaboration will serve as a model eco-system for how to create more peaceful, just and inclusive communities that benefit all Pittsburghers," said Sarah Mendelson, who heads CMU's Heinz College in Washing-

ton, D.C. As a former senior official at the U.S. Agency for International Development and then as an ambassador to the United Nations, she helped shape and then advocate for the SDGs.

Pittsburgh is a participant of a multi-city leadership convening on the SDGs led by the Brookings Institute along with New York, Los Angeles, Orlando and a host of international cities. Tony Pipa, Senior Fellow, Global Economy and Development at Brookings Institute said, "Congratulations to the City of Pittsburgh on producing its first VLR. Its seriousness in measuring its progress against the SDGs reflects the city's commitment to equity, inclusivity, and sustainability, reinforcing its leadership as one of the top places to live and visit in the U.S."

Mayor Peduto will be sending a resolution to City Council requesting a formalized adoption of the SDGs to serve as a framework for city policies, practices and procedures.

The City's adoption of the SDGs and the development of the VLR is a cross-departmental partnership between the Department of City Planning, the Mayor's Office of Equity, the Commission on Human Relations, and the Gender Equity Commission.

The City of Pittsburgh's first Voluntary Local Review of the UN Sustainable Development Goals can be viewed at:

[https://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/red-tail/images/12240\\_Pittsburgh\\_VLR\\_2020\\_Draft\\_FINAL.pdf](https://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/red-tail/images/12240_Pittsburgh_VLR_2020_Draft_FINAL.pdf)



# HAPPY KWANZAA



## In the Treetops

By Jeff Karwoski

When is the last time you have been somewhere that no human has set foot before? I would guess few people could answer that they've been in such a place. Humans have existed on this planet for a long time and, as a collective species, have transected the globe for generation upon generation. We have explored every inch of this planet until even the most exotic locales became popular tourist destinations. Take Mt. Everest, for example, the tallest mountain on Earth and, up until 1953, a mystical place where humans had never set foot. Now, if you have the cash, you can be ferried to the top of the mountain by a team of Sherpas. As you climb what the locals consider a sacred mountain, you will literally trek past tons of trash left by your fellow man, including some of their own frozen corpses who's remains act not only as a stark reminder to the perils of the location, but as a reminder that



Photo: Jeff Karwoski

you were not there first.

Humans have left their mark on almost every square inch of the planet. We are the only species to have done that. I'm not saying that's good or bad. It's probably both, but it's just a fact. Have you ever imagined yourself to be the first one ever to stand in a certain location, to exist in an untouched place? Humans seem to have a thing about being

first. Why is that? Part of it could be some innate drive that pushes us forward as a species, declaring more places discovered, more mysteries unraveled. Getting to these places first helps us put our stamp on them. We can humanize them, demystify. Getting to the untouched places dissolves their wildness and, in turn, I think it dissolves our fears of the unknown. The average person may not care to climb the tallest peaks in the world but it gives them comfort knowing someone else has.

So, where can you find a place left on Earth that is pure and unblemished by mankind? A place where you can be free to revel in the world without stumbling upon an old soda can or some forgotten relic? A place where you can exist outside of your social boundaries and human frailties, and just be alone and alive and released from all previous engagements? If you're an arborist, the answer to that question is easy. You go to the tops of trees. Now, many of the trees I work on

have been climbed before, as is evident by old pruning cuts or a line of gaff scars left by a climber who used spikes on his boots to ascend the trunk. Some trees I climb every year to prune them, and it's like visiting and old friend. Some of them are really hard to prune though, so it's like visiting an old friend who's a pain in the neck but, in the end, you're always glad to see them. Other trees I climb just to climb. No work, only climbing and enjoying time spent with a fascinating organism. These climbs, which usually take place in trees that are growing in the forests, are first ascents.

First ascent is not a concept that I came to recognize until recently. I never used to approach a tree and think about whether or not someone had been up in it before. I just climbed the tree and enjoyed my time. The concept of the treetop as a place where no man has set foot has only occurred to me more re-

*Continued on Page Nine*

## The Green Way Through This Fierce Beauty

It's time to change. Are we going to stop fighting and competing and work together? As the children's song goes, "The more we get together, the happier we'll be." The world is never going to be the same. Necessity is the mother of invention. There is no "business as usual" anymore. We have to be creative; the old ways don't work anymore. The way out of our depression and anxiety is to do what we can. There is beauty everywhere; we have to be more awake to see it.

There are solutions. The world situation is full of troubles but also opportunities. We have addictions—tobacco, alcohol, narcotics, stimulants such as caffeine and cocaine, sugar, fossil fuels, social status. We are addicted to war (addictedtowar.com). We have set ways of thinking and feeling and behaving. I, for instance, though supposedly intelligent, continued thoughtlessly not taking care of my teeth for so long that now I have to have most, if not all, of them removed.

Let's talk about solutions. Plants, including the one-celled algae, use carbon dioxide and make oxygen. Fuel cells take hydrogen (such as

from organic waste) and make oxygen and water. There were electric cars 100 years ago. There is no Planet B, so we might as well wake up to the fact that we're all part of the human family. Every plant is precious and should be protected and nurtured to the extent possible. We can switch from plastics to bioplastics, such as hemp. We can put our kitchen scraps back into the soil they came from. We can drive and fly only when necessary. We can buy and eat local naturally grown food—fresher, more nutritious, better tasting. And these are less expensive than big ag manufactured food when you consider the transportation distances and soil and other environmental destruction that chemical agriculture causes. Local economies make communities more resilient in this uncertain world.

Nikola Tesla was into solar and geothermal, and had a device which used what he called radiant energy, but which physicists nowadays call zero-point energy. Like solar power, it absorbs electrons from the environment. (There are, of course, electrons everywhere). When we purge ourselves of greed and put Tesla's and others' work in gear, we will

have all the energy we need—to the chagrin of those with trillions of dollars invested in fossil fuels. Both birds and the insects they eat are in steep decline; we need to respect the insects, trying not to kill any of them.

Growing food is now being taught in schools. Every plant has a reason for being. Everybody's Garden now has a little sign by the sidewalk that says, "Pardon the weeds, we're feeding the bees." Morning glories, for instance, used to be called field bindweed because they can thrive on poor soil and so, as they rot and die, they make the soil better. Here are some of the plants now at Everybody's Garden: Rose-of-Sharon, thyme, arugula, sunchoke (Jerusalem artichoke), rhubarb, tomato, garlic, basil, hot pepper, roses, dill, collards, strawberries, rappini, horseradish, apple, peach, apricot, mustard, kale, sunflower, parsley, borage, sage, peppermint, apple mint, lemon grass, hot pepper, and iris.

None of us chose this mess we're in. There is a third greenhouse gas to be concerned about. Nitrous oxide, a byproduct of the manufacture



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of anhydrous ammonia as nitrogen fertilizer, is not only a strong greenhouse gas but is also destructive of the ozone layer that protects Earth from ultraviolet B radiation from the Sun, resulting in increased skin cancers and cataracts to all animals, aside from what stresses it puts on plants.

*"Here's to all the idealists who could make of this world a Heaven on Earth. And here's to all the 'realists' who are making it the Hell that it is." —Anonymous*



## In The Treetops - Continued from Page Eight

cently during time spent reflecting on my career. I ask myself the question, "Why do I continue to do what I do?" or, "Why do I dream of the tops of trees?" I think it's for a few reasons. Climbing has always been an escape for me, a chance to leave my earthly worries behind and ascend literally to a higher place. You see, being at the top of a tree is much different than being on the ground. It's a whole different zone up there where the land and the sky part ways. The temperature is colder or hotter than the one below, and the wind is...well, it's windier, and it feels so pure. Aside from that, the views are stunning and you can hear things from a much greater distance from your vantage. The element of movement is also present in the tops of trees. Unlike being anchored to the ground, the top of a tree is always in motion when you're in it. Being the first person to ever be there offers an opportunity to explore what's around you and see what no one has ever seen.

Visually, I can tell you the tops of trees are stunning. When you're up there, you can witness a microcosm

of organisms that can't be seen from the ground. A world of mosses and lichens grow among the treetops. Insects are all around. Treetops are home to a vast array of wildlife as well. I've been up in trees with raccoons and hives of bees, and monkeys in the jungles of Guatemala. I've been up there with snakes and termites and birds of prey, and one time I rescued a very expensive, very scared Blue Macaw that had flown away from its owner and wouldn't come down. Climbing trees has become an identifying part of my life. It is something I have spent decades learning to do and I have made a long and successful career out of doing it. Oh, I've tried to quit my job on a number of occasions but, somehow, I always get roped back in—that's a little tree climbing humor for you, but seriously though, I always wanted to do something in life that I loved. Life is too short to do anything else. I love climbing trees—always have, always will. So, when I hear people say, "Hey! You're the tree guy!" it makes me feel great because then I know I've made it to the top.

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## Reasons You Might Not Want to Move Right Now

By Julie Block

Greenfield has been our favorite neighborhood for a long time, and we loved living there ourselves! Although we recently moved into a bigger home a couple of miles away to accommodate our growing family, we still have deep roots in the neighborhood, and we have fond memories of walking through the hilly (but friendly!) streets, taking the kids for ice cream, and visiting Schenley park. Making the decision to move was a tough one, but we ultimately decided it was for the best so that our family had extra room to move around. We did have one advantage, however: We didn't have to make our decision in the middle of a pandemic. We've met with many homeowners and potential homeowners who are weighing their options carefully. If you're thinking about leaving Greenfield, Hazelwood, or another nearby neighborhood, make sure you consider all of your options before putting your house up for sale. The circumstances surrounding your home and the reasons you want to leave it are likely completely unique to you and your family. Still, there are a variety of reasons you may want to hold onto your home a little longer.

### You don't have enough home equity.

What is home equity? The shortest answer is: The amount of money you have in the home after you pay off everything you owe on it. If you bought your home recently with just a few thousand down, you may not get too much out of it after you pay back the bank and pay any closing fees. Closing fees in Pittsburgh are about 10% after you pay the 2.5% transfer tax, realtor fees, and title costs. Right now, homes valued between \$200,000 - 350,000 are in extremely high demand, and home values have increased beyond our best expectations in the last year. Homes in higher price ranges, especially over \$600,000, are seeing less competition and more conservative growth. We also expect the market could shift quickly from a seller's market to a buyer's market as we navigate local and national economic changes. If you're considering selling your home, make sure you

have some flexibility to go down on price if the market dips before you sell.

### You're interested in remodeling.

Remodeling is an incredibly viable (and oftentimes productive!) alternative to moving. By strategically remodeling your home, you can improve its functionality while increasing its value—something that could ultimately benefit the entire family.

If you're weighing the pros and cons of conducting a remodel, check out our own remodeling story on our website (use the link at the end of the article) and learn from our experiences. In our last house, we used my design skills and Ted's remodeling skills to transform our cold, dark basement into a lovely play space for the kids, a home office for the adults, and an efficient laundry room with plenty of counter space and shelves. It helped us stay in our home for another year before we sold it, and it added great value when it was time to move on!

### Weighing Your Options

There are many factors involved in selling a home. Although downsizing (or upgrading, if you've been financially fortunate during the pandemic) may seem like a wise choice, there are many choices to consider. For more details on evaluating whether selling a home is the right choice for you, continue reading this article on [www.blocksintheburgh.com](http://www.blocksintheburgh.com).

*Julie and Ted Block are RE/MAX Select real estate agents serving Greenfield, Hazelwood, and the surrounding neighborhoods. You can contact them by emailing [theblocks@blocksintheburgh.com](mailto:theblocks@blocksintheburgh.com) or by calling 412.926.7976.*



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Going to a hospital or doctor's office when well adds a higher number of people and can overwhelm medical staff.



**CALL FOR ADVICE**

If you are **sick** and think you have been **exposed** to COVID-19 **call** your health care provider or 1-877-PA-HEALTH to discuss your exposure.



**SEEK CARE**

If you are **sick** and feel you have an **emergency**, **call** your health care provider or seek medical care.

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# Our Neighborhoods' Problems are "Connected"

## By Junction Coalition

The adjoining communities of Hazelwood and The Run share more than a zip code: They are the two neighborhoods most directly affected by the Hazelwood Green development and its most controversial feature, the proposed Mon-Oakland Connector (MOC) shuttle road through Schenley Park. Hazelwood Green owner, Almono Partners, commissioned the road, funded with \$23 million of Pittsburgh's capital budget, primarily to link its development to university campuses in Oakland—but says its shuttles will improve mobility for Hazelwood residents. (Almono Partners has voiced no interest in improving anything for Run residents, except perhaps their odds of moving away.)

Getting in and out of Hazelwood can be a major problem, partly because the three streets that serve as entrance/exit points suffer from decades of neglect. The stretch of Irvine Street between Greenfield Avenue and Hazelwood Avenue is a prime example. It contains just about every dangerous condition imaginable for pedestrians, cyclists, and even motorists. A fatal car crash in January 2019 involved frozen seepage from the hill above the east side of the road. This same water helps create year-round hazards on

City-owned sidewalks that have disintegrated beside speeding traffic. Vehicles often block other sections of the sidewalk, forcing travelers into the road.

Only the bravest/most desperate walkers and bikers consider Irvine Street an option—and for people using wheelchairs or pushing strollers, it's not an option at all. Nor is the long way around through Hazelwood Green accessible to them because it involves navigating steps or crossing Second Avenue. Irvine Street offers the most direct connection between Hazelwood and The Run. The one-mile distance would be easy to cross if not for the serious risks involved. Residents of Hazelwood could safely access Schenley Park without a car. And Run residents would find it much simpler to reach their nearest post office, library, and shops in Hazelwood.

Fixing this dangerous stretch of sidewalk has been identified as a priority by everyone involved. The Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Plan lists sidewalk construction and improvements as a key strategy to give residents and visitors access to Hazelwood. Our Money. Our Solutions., a community-driven alternative to the MOC, calls for an "Irvine/Second Avenue sidewalk audit and replacement/install to ensure ADA-compliant width and curb

cuts, from Greenfield Ave. through the Hazelwood business district." Pittsburgh's Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI), responsible for building the MOC, listed "2nd Avenue sidewalk" as a component of the MOC project in a January 2020 memo to City Council. DOMI committed \$700,000 to the sidewalk (to be matched by a potential grant from the state of Pennsylvania). The memo marked the first time DOMI publicly identified certain components (including the sidewalk) as part of the project and broke down costs. However, in DOMI's latest budget presented at their October public meetings concerning the MOC, the sidewalk funding has disappeared. It's unclear whether DOMI will receive the state grant they say they applied for.

Compare the ill-defined, will-o'-the-wisp accounting of the Irvine Street sidewalk funding to the single-minded focus with which the MOC has been pushed over the past five years. Even in the midst of a pandemic that has left Pittsburgh with a \$100+ million budget shortfall, the MOC is the city's single largest transportation corridor investment. Some say budgets are moral documents. At the very least, Pittsburgh's budget represents a statement of its priorities. Building a road through a public park for pri-

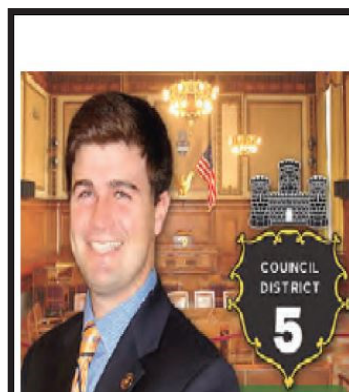
vate shuttles in no way reflects the priorities of Pittsburghers who are being asked to fund this project. Irvine Street/Second Avenue is only one glaring example of community needs unmet in favor of funding the MOC. As members of these communities, we still have a chance to come together and advocate for the money to go toward improvements we've been requesting for years.

It's high time for City Controller Michael Lamb to audit the \$14.5 million already budgeted to the MOC in 2018 and 2019. Please join us in encouraging him to do so by calling 412-255-2054 or emailing [City\\_Controller@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:City_Controller@pittsburghpa.gov). Furthermore, City Council must demand a line-item listing of the additional \$4.15 million requested for 2021 to make sure these funds are directed first to fixing existing infrastructure, rather than creating new infrastructure of questionable value to existing communities. Our public money should prioritize solutions to our problems, not developers' wishes.

*You can read this article with links to source material at [www.junctioncoalition.org/2020/11/18/our-neighborhoods-problems-are-connected](http://www.junctioncoalition.org/2020/11/18/our-neighborhoods-problems-are-connected)*

Hello! We are a team of students at the University of Pittsburgh doing a project on perspectives on political division in local Pittsburgh communities and how to bridge the gap. **Participants will be compensated \$5 for their time and interviews will take about 15 minutes, held over Zoom or phone.**

If you would be willing to be interviewed for this project, please fill out this form at [tinyurl.com/pittperspectives](http://tinyurl.com/pittperspectives) or feel free to contact us directly at [pittperspectives@gmail.com](mailto:pittperspectives@gmail.com) if you have questions!  
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# Tax Policy Changes are Urgently Needed to Help Our Local Businesses

By PA State Rep. Jake Wheatley

In more than half a decade as the Democratic chairman of the House Finance Committee, I've grown to fully appreciate and understand the committee's significance and vital role in how Pennsylvania generates revenue. I will admit that tax policy rarely excites a conversation but, the truth is, it affects each one of us. We are embarking on a harrowing journey as we attempt to bridge a potential \$2 billion budget deficit left in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. We may agree to disagree over how the last six months were handled, but the reality remains that we must pass a budget by the end of November to fund government operations through June of next year.

Our committee recently considered a bill that would remove the 20-year cap on carrying over net operating losses. That amounts to a significant long-term tax break for out-of-state corporations operating in Pennsylvania. A recent estimate by the state Department of Revenue showed that out of more than 112,000 of these corporations operating in Pennsylvania, approximately 60% pay zero in taxes! Corporations headquartered in other states can shift profits from store to store and in and out of the state to create gains and losses on paper, despite

significant overall income. Pennsylvania-based corporations can't hide their income outside the state, so it's no shock that they make up the bulk of the 40% of corporate taxpayers that do pay their fair share.

The corporate net income tax is the third largest source of revenue in the state, but that makes it even more important to not lose track of the personal income tax, by far our largest source of revenue. Among the handful of states with a flat income tax rate, Pennsylvania is nearly the lowest at 3.07%. Unlike the federal government—and many states using the federal return, where the tax rate reflects your income level—PA's regressive flat rate means that the more income you make, the less it impacts you.

The U.S. Small Business Administration estimates that there are nearly one million small businesses in Pennsylvania. They're the lifeblood of our state economy, signifying most of our employees and employers. Sadly, these statistics are exactly why I was so troubled by our last committee meeting, where the majority moved partisan tax subsidies that provide advantages to these corporations headquartered in other states. It does absolutely nothing for our small businesses, whose owners employ our workforce and pay the personal income tax on their



Rep. Jake Wheatley [jakewheatley.com](http://jakewheatley.com)

profits.

I have long advocated for legislation to adjust our tax rates so that "passive incomes," making money off money, are taxed at a higher rate than the incomes of those who earn a paycheck or run a Pennsylvania business. This is referred to as the "Fair Share Plan." It would provide the working class with a small reduction in taxes, offset by increases from passive incomes, and still generate additional revenue. It means that we can lower taxes on those who work for a living or run their own business by increasing the rates on money made off money. Keep in mind, the state constitution's uniformity clause requires a uniform tax rate among the same class of subjects, but there are eight classes of income, and it doesn't say they have to be the same rate of tax.

It's imperative that we consider bills to provide workers and small businesses the relief they so desperately need. A recent survey by Main Street America found that 60% of Pennsylvania small businesses are likely to close permanently due to COVID-19, with over 80% reporting more than 50% revenue losses over the last six months. That doesn't include the enormous increase in the number of Pennsylvanians who have applied for unemployment compensation. Our communities cannot survive if our residents can't work and local businesses close. The House Finance Committee should be leading the conversation on tax policy, not offering more corporate subsidies and ignoring the working class.

*Rep. Jake Wheatley is Democratic chairman of the Pa. House Finance Committee and represents the 19th Legislative District.*



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# Wolf Administration: More Than Half-a-Million Pennsylvanians have Downloaded the COVID Alert PA App

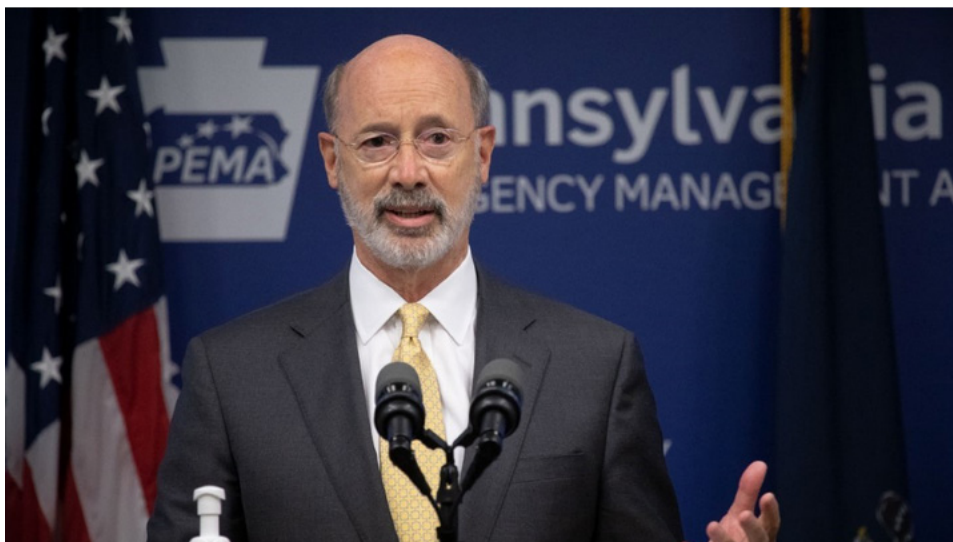
Press Release

Governor Tom Wolf has announced that more than 500,000 Pennsylvanians have added their phone to the fight to stop the spread of coronavirus by downloading the COVID Alert PA mobile app.

“Thank you to the more than half-a-million Pennsylvanians who have united together to stop the spread of COVID-19 by downloading the COVID Alert PA app,” Gov. Wolf said. “The app, along with our other mitigation efforts, including mask-wearing, social distancing, hand washing and avoiding gatherings, all contribute to stopping the spread of this deadly virus. It’s time for everyone to do their part, mask up, download the app and stay safe.”

By downloading COVID Alert PA, you can get a notification if you have been in close contact with someone who later tests positive for COVID-19, or anonymously notify other residents if you yourself test positive. The app is a free and voluntary mobile app developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Health in partnership with NearForm, University of Pennsylvania and MIT Lincoln Laboratory using Apple and Google’s Exposure Notification System.

The app’s features include an interactive COVID-19 symptom check-in, alerts for potential exposures to the virus, updates on the latest public health data about



PA Governor Tom Wolf

Photo: PA.gov

COVID-19 in PA and public health guidance for what to do if you have a potential exposure to COVID-19. The free app can be found in the Google Play Store and the Apple App Store by searching for “Covid alert pa.”

“If you test positive for COVID-19, we encourage you to download the app and enter the random six-digit code given to you by a case investigator,” Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine said. “This will allow people you encountered who have the app to know that they have been exposed to COVID-19. They can then take important steps to protect themselves and others like getting tested or quarantining.”

The app is designed to ensure privacy of the user. It does not use GPS, location services or any movement or geographical information. It will never collect, transmit or store

personal information. It is completely anonymous.

The app does collect user statistics such as the number of downloads or the symptom check-in demographics that people can voluntarily share. Since the launch on September 22, we know:

- There have been 506,180 downloads onto smartphone devices.
- There is an average of 37,297 COVID Check-Ins for symptoms per day.
- Around 95 percent of app users reported “feeling good” during their COVID Check-In per day.

- There were 268 positive cases who confirmed their positivity through the app, which generated 91 close-contact exposure alerts.
- Of those who received an exposure alert, 14 requested a callback to speak with a trained contact tracer for further support.



Download the COVID Alert PA app and make your phone part of the fight.



## HOW TO GET TESTED FOR COVID-19

PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENT	HEALTH CARE PROVIDER
<p><b>I HAVE MILD SYMPTOMS:</b> Please stay home. If you feel worse, contact your health care provider.</p>	<p><b>I FEEL A PATIENT SHOULD BE TESTED:</b> Order a test without consulting with the Department of Health through a commercial lab.</p>
<p><b>I HAVE SEVERE SYMPTOMS:</b> If you have a fever over 100°, shortness of breath and cough, CALL your health care provider.</p>	<p><b>I WANT TO CONSULT WITH DOH TO SEE IF A TEST IS NEEDED:</b> Call 1-877-PA-HEALTH.</p>
<p>If you do not have a health care provider, CALL your local health department or 1-877-PA-HEALTH.</p>	<p><b>I CONSULTED BUT DOH DOESN'T RECOMMEND A TEST:</b> If you feel that a patient should be tested, order a test through a commercial lab.</p>
<p>If you still need help, CALL your local emergency department.</p>	

**THE STATE PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY IS PRIORITIZING THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE FOR TESTING:**

1. People who are severely sick for unknown reasons
2. People in congregate care settings
3. People in contact with known cases of COVID-19
4. Symptomatic healthcare workers and first responders

**INFORMATION + UPDATES:**  
[HEALTH.PA.GOV](https://www.health.pa.gov)

## What Does Stay-At-Home Mean for OUTDOOR RECREATION?

**You Can Go Outdoors**  
You can go outdoors to engage in outdoor activity, such as walking, hiking, or running if you maintain social distancing.

**You Can Recreate Locally**  
You can recreate in your neighborhood or a local park or trail that is nearest to your home. Look for locations within 15 minutes of your home.

**Avoid Crowded Areas**  
Avoid crowded trails or parks. Find other nearby locations or go during less popular hours.

**Don't Travel Far for Recreation**  
You should not travel outside of your community to other outdoor locations across the state, such as state parks, forests, private camps, leased campsites, etc.

**Protect Others While Outdoors**  
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# Happy Holidays!

## New Year's Resolutions, Reflections, and Ways to Adapt to Winter

By Gerri Tipton

It's the most wonderful time of the year! It seems like as soon as fall hits in September, winter is right around the corner knocking on our door. We passed through Halloween, Thanksgiving, and now we're getting ready to prepare for Christmas and the New Year. Even though fall is my favorite season of the year, I don't mind winter (except for the cold). I like to look outside on a snowy day to see the crisp snow crystals fall from the sky slowly and dissolve into the ground. I still like to play in snow, then afterwards make some hot chocolate to get warm while watching the different Christmas programs on TV. Not to mention, this is the time of the year where families come together.

But things this year may be different for everyone. It has been suggested that families should not have any holiday gatherings because of the coronavirus. As much of a bummer as that is, the important thing is to keep everyone safe. So, what are some ways you can adapt to winter during this pandemic? There are a ton of things you can do. I know

I touched on some things in my Thanksgiving article last month, but with the constant everyday changes, things are unpredictable.

Christmas time, of course, should be spent with family, but it's been suggested that no one should have any big gatherings or go "house hopping" as you might normally do. When I asked a co-worker what she was doing for Christmas, she said that she was going to skip out on the big family dinner this year and have a small dinner for her immediate family (which consisted of 4 people). Now I'm pretty sure there are a lot of you who have a big immediate family and, of course, want to see each other. But maybe this year you'll want to consider doing something a bit different; like having a Zoom meeting on Christmas. I know it's not the same as physically being around everyone but, this way, you are still seeing each other and spending time with each other.

The same goes for New Year's Eve. This is really a bummer to most, because mostly everyone loves either going to a New Year's Eve party or throwing one. I threw one three years back and it was so

much fun. So, for this year, you probably would want to do things differently than you would have a couple of years ago. This is also the perfect time to set those New Year's resolutions. Pull out that notebook and get to writing down your goals. What are some things you want to accomplish next year, what are you grateful for, what are your plans, what are you going to do differently? Like I've said in plenty of my other articles, now is the perfect time to think (not overthink) and get some plans in motion. In the same breath, don't overthink or overwork yourself too much. Relax! There is only so much a person can handle and do. Quarantine time has been the best time for me because I get a chance to catch up on some things that I had not been able to before, like catching up on some new Netflix shows, cleaning, reading, writing—finding things to keep me going but at peace at the same time. Catch up on some well needed rest! Anyone who knows me knows that I love taking naps. I try and take one every day if I can. Turn your TV off, put your phone on do not disturb, and relax your body and mind. A good nap is good for rejuvenating yourself.

How do you feel about exercising? Now is the time to get your body in shape! If you don't feel up to working out at a gym, there are

thousands of free YouTube videos you can watch of different exercise programs. When we first went into quarantine the gyms were closed, so I did 10-minute workouts in the house and burned a good number of calories. When the weather got nice, I took walks outside.

Make the best out of what you can while you can. This, I'm sure, has been a very stressful time for us with everything that has been going on. While there isn't much we can do to help the situation (except to wear your mask and limit going out), there are ways in which you can help yourself. What I learned this year about myself is exploring my creativity. You never know how creative and strong you can be until you get in a situation where you have to be. This pandemic has been a perfect example of that. There are a lot of things that I knew I could do, but just didn't do it and gave excuses as to why I couldn't do it. Now, did I need this pandemic for me to do certain things? No, but I believe it gave me the push and the motivation to get started on some goals. We have to wait a little bit longer before things can get back to normal again. But until then, stay focused on your goals, do things for yourself, and keep on thriving. Merry Christmas and have a happy New Year.

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# Masks

A Story by John Werthman

My name is COVID, and I am unstoppable. Compare me to the CSX #8888 runaway train, also known as the Crazy Eights. It was an incident that inspired an action thriller movie in 2010. Two tanker cars in that train were filled with thousands of gallons of Phenol, a chemical compound that can bring on severe respiratory distress when inhaled. That story ended on a positive note. A railroad crew caught the runaway and coupled to the rear, stopping the train.

This story is more than equal to that incident and may not have a happy ending. My virus is like Phenol, and it can infiltrate the lungs and potentially kill. There is no heroic train engineer nor track switches to throw that would alter my course. I have nurtured the 2020 Corona Virus to the best of my meager ability and utilized the animal kingdom again to come up with the best formula.

Man has sought ingenious methods to counter my attack. His approach has included herd immunity, rapid testing, and social distancing. He has employed the medical field to pursue a vaccine, but the topic bantered about the most has been the use of masks. I love it. The more the issue is discussed and argued, the fewer people want to wear them. I couldn't ask for a better diversion.

People resist and say they should have the freedom to choose whether or not to wear a mask. They have rights guaranteed by their constitution. I welcome that strategy. The longer I stay around, people will grow weary, and mask use will diminish.

Masks are not new. Man has used them for thousands of years during ceremonies, and he has unearthed archaeological evidence at burial sites and found murals depicting them. Wearers of these shrouds have always thought the device would ward off evil spirits.

I'm no evil spirit. I'm real. My virus today has brought on a new legion of mask wearers. I am confident people never envisioned that anyone could walk into a bank today wearing a mask, but that is the path mandated. I love to see that the worldwide medical field advice has been stretched like a rubber band before breaking,

Humans do not like to be told what they can or cannot do. I guess it's not in their genetic make-up. Are they doubting science and becoming submissive to me? Keep debating, people. The talk is cheap. Their actions or inaction speak louder than words.

# Reader Call: The Six Word Challenge

The concept of distilling a story or poem down to a mere six words has existed for several decades, with the first well-known example being attributed to Ernest Hemingway in the 1920's (though there is no official record of him writing any six-word stories). For years, Eric Boyd wrote one or more six-word pieces a day, often by request. People wrote to him with long, complicated prompts or real-life experiences which they wanted to see condensed into six words. Often these were philosophical or deeply personal, sometimes they were downright absurd. Readers of The Homepage are continually invited to reach out, participate and request such works as well! Please email editor@hazelwoodinitiative.org with your prompts, challenges, or real-world scenarios to be turned into a six-word story/poem.

Check out the latest prompt submissions and the poems created by local writers below!

**This month's prompts: Write a 6-word poem about...**

- **Pittsburgh covered in snow.**
- **How it feels to get lost in a good book.**
- **Something in nature that inspired you as a kid.**

Snowplows will rumble  
Shovels will grumble

Blanket of white. Time for flight.

Transported away  
Sometimes want to stay

Immersed. Gaining knowledge of the universe.

Picking teaberries for mom  
Childhood fun

Weeping willow, tears on my pillow.

—Miss Bea

—MaryAnn Majcher

Majestic when sunny. Dreary, if not.

Cold, bleak, uninviting  
White, bright, beautiful

Not a care in the world.

Childlike adventure,  
Escape reality,  
Vivid imagination!

The beauty and vastness were  
overwhelming.

Clouds flying high,  
Fluffy cotton-ball shapes!

—Jeananne Burger

—Sgt. "J"

**Here are prompts for next month's issue!**  
**Please submit your work by Sunday, December 13th.**

Write a 6-word poem about:

- **The unseen depths of an ocean.**
- **How you think the world will end.**
- **Joe Biden becoming our next president.**

## WHAT TYPE OF MASK DO I NEED?

### HOMEMADE MASK OR PAPER MASK



**WHO SHOULD WEAR:**  
General public

**WHEN TO WEAR:**  
When a person can't perform social distancing; scarves and bandanas can be used if necessary.

**USE LIMITATIONS:**  
Cloth masks should be washed after each use; don't wear damp or when wet from spit or mucus.

### SURGICAL MASK



**WHO SHOULD WEAR:**  
Health care workers and patients in health care settings

**WHEN TO WEAR:**  
During single or multiple patient interactions or routine health procedures; recommended when N95s aren't available.

**USE LIMITATIONS:**  
Ideally should be discarded after each patient encounter. Extended use is preferable to reuse.

### N95 RESPIRATOR



**WHO SHOULD WEAR:**  
Health care workers

**WHEN TO WEAR:**  
Caring for patients with COVID-19 and performing procedures that put them most at risk of virus exposure.

**USE LIMITATIONS:**  
Ideally should be discarded after each patient encounter. Extended use is preferable to reuse.

# Take Care of Your Liver: Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease and Glutathione



Dear Friends,

The holidays are upon us and we typically overindulge in sweets, high carb foods, processed toxic foods, and plenty of alcohol—all of which have a negative impact on our liver, our most important detox organ. Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), the accumulation of excess fat in the liver in the absence of alcohol abuse, currently affects between 30 and 40 percent of the United States population. Leading experts describe the growing incidence of the disease as an “epidemic.” While NAFLD can be mild, roughly one out of five cases will progress to steatohepatitis (a more severe form of the disease), thereby setting the stage for liver cirrhosis, liver cancer and death.

Incidentally, from 2000 to 2015, death rates for chronic liver disease and cirrhosis in the United States jumped by 31 percent among people aged 45 to 64 years.

The liver—a three-pound organ nestled right under the ribcage—is a virtual superhero when it comes to detoxifying the body, cleansing the blood and fighting infections. But, the barrage of environmental toxins to which we are exposed on a regular basis—a “witch’s brew” of synthetic chemicals, pesticides, heavy metals, secondhand smoke and industrial emissions—exerts a toxic burden that can impair liver function and health. Add to this toxic burden: the adverse effects of mercury dental fillings, toxic medications, alcohol use, sedentary lifestyle and the sugar-laden, GMO-heavy Standard American Diet, and it’s clear the detoxifying powers of the liver are being challenged like no other time in history. That’s the bad news.

Now, for the good news. An array of non-toxic natural nutrients awaits, ready to go to work combating liver damage, reducing fatty deposits and helping the liver regenerate and re-

new itself. Here are the top 10 herbs and supplements that, when used with lifestyle changes such as exercise and proper nutrition, can help.

## Regenerate Your Liver: 10 Powerful Remedies

- Milk thistle extracts improve liver function on many levels
- Glutathione, the body’s “master antioxidant,” is a major player in liver health
- The anti-inflammatory power of ginger for optimal liver health
- Curcumin in turmeric helps to “put the brakes on” NAFLD
- The mighty mineral zinc offers powerful effects against fatty liver disease
- Vitamin C helps to neutralize toxins within the liver
- Alpha lipoic acid rejuvenates the liver naturally without negative side effects
- Get proactive about your liver health with probiotics
- CoQ10 may help reverse NAFLD and prevent progression to NASH
- Phosphatidylcholine promotes the breakdown of fats and the regrowth of liver cells

Glutathione, the body’s “master antioxidant, is a major player in liver health. Glutathione, a disease-fighting natural molecule found in every cell, is often described as the body’s master antioxidant. Its tasks include neutralizing free radicals, preventing oxidative damage, protecting delicate cell mitochondria, repairing DNA and transporting vital amino acids in and out of cells. Glutathione also acts as a sort of “bodyguard” and facilitator for other indispensable antioxidants, recycling and renewing the body’s stores of vitamin C, vitamin E, alpha lipoic acid and CoQ10.

While life-sustaining glutathione is abundant in young people, levels drop with normal aging. Other threats to glutathione levels include illness, injury, stress, environmental toxins and medications like acetaminophen and antibiotics. Keep in mind, insufficient levels of glutathione can cripple the detoxification process, causing inflammation to worsen and setting the stage for degenerative disease. For example, researchers have found that people with low glutathione levels are more likely to suffer heart attacks.

Therefore, to say the obvious: it’s so important to safeguard stores of this precious substance. Although experts advise consuming at least 250 mg of dietary glutathione a day, most Americans, with about 35 mg a day, fall short of the mark. You can increase your dietary glutathione intake with organic asparagus, avocado, spinach, okra, cantaloupe and citrus fruits.

It’s also important to consume foods that are rich in cysteine, a primary building block of glutathione. Cruciferous vegetables, such as organic Brussel sprouts, cabbage and kale, can offer significant support, as well as organic, cage-free eggs. Another way to support your glutathione levels is to consume undenatured, raw grass-fed whey protein, which is a great source of cysteine. Overall, eating an organic diet free of pesticides and GMOs, drinking pure water and limiting exposure to pesticides can also help protect glutathione levels. Plus, certain supplements, including N-acetyl cysteine, alpha lipoic acid and the mineral selenium, can help to recycle glu-

tathione, while silymarin has been shown to increase glutathione levels in the liver by 35 percent.

When it comes to oral supplementation, some natural health experts question its value, maintaining that glutathione is broken down too quickly in the digestive tract to be of benefit. However, if you would like to try supplementation, look for an acetylated form of glutathione, which increases its bioavailability. Integrative physicians typically recommend from 200 to 500 mg of glutathione daily. Glutathione is the body’s essential health AID (Antioxidant, Immune Booster and Detoxifier). In fact, your life depends on glutathione. Without it, your cells would disintegrate from unrestrained oxidation, your body would have little resistance to bacteria, viruses, and cancer, and your liver would shrivel up from the eventual accumulation of toxins.

Visit our website for more information on Glutathione: [maapgh.com/glutathione.html](http://maapgh.com/glutathione.html). We also recommend Glutathione to protect and lessen the harmful inflamma-



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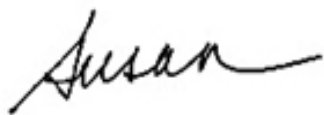
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## Liver - Continued from Page Eighteen

tory responses to Covid-19. Please take care of your liver. It is crucial to your health and quality of life! I have been personally taking Acetyl-Glutathione for over 15 years and I have never felt more protected or better! I am here for you to answer your questions and help you achieve quality of life.

*To Your Health,*



*Susan Merenstein, Pharmacist and Owner*

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References:

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**By Vicar Silas Hasselbrook**

Human communication is a necessity. In these times of quarantine, isolation, and fear, something that many long for is the face-to-face human interaction we used to enjoy. Sure, we may still interact with people but it is no longer face-to-face—more like eye-to-eye, since most of our face is covered with a mask. Hopefully we still engage with our friends and family. But it is becoming a time of virtual reality: meetings, school and classes, even some holiday celebrations. People work from home, order food and supplies to their home, but going to work, shop, or eat out meant there was human interaction, human communication. Some like being holed up at home, but it is a healthy thing to interact with your fellow humans, if not in speaking, at least in society. We were created to be social. Increasingly, more and more are languishing, appreciating what they had previously taken for granted: human communication. Just ask your grandma or grandpa in the nursing home or your family in other states you can't visit because of restrictions. We are social creatures. We want to know what the word is, from and about our fellow human beings. Many are realizing how much they miss communication that does not involve a screen, a mask, or social distancing. I am not advocating that we get rid of these precautions and restrictions. I am merely pointing out a need and a feeling we are experiencing as a society.

Human communication is also a privilege. We often take for granted how special it is to talk with another person, even if they are someone with whom we don't agree. Every person you interact with is someone who has a unique life, experience, and way of thinking. No two persons are the same. When we talk to one another, we are sharing our unique self with another, even as they share theirs with us. Even if you think you are not sharing anything, and really don't want to anyway, every time you communicate with someone else, you show them how you, the unique person you are, think and speak. This is certainly a personal thing, and it should be valued.

Even our disagreements should be treated with respect. Yes, we all have faults, shortcomings, and im-

## What's the Word?

perfections, but that did not prevent God from becoming man, and bringing the Gospel message to us that He, Jesus Christ, was come to live and die to save us from our faults, shortcomings, imperfections, and rebellion against God. Hebrews 2 discusses that we, the human race, are God's most valued creatures. He did not send His Son to become an angel. He did not send His Son to become a rock, a plant, or an animal. He sent Him to be the God-man, to die for the sins of the world and open heaven's gates for us. That speaks volumes about how much God loves us, how interested God was in saving us, in communicating with us. Yet, none of this was because we earned God's love and respect. We are His prized creatures, not His perfect ones. We need Jesus to live the perfect life of obedience and love to God that we could not, and die the death our rebellion against God deserved.

During this Christmas month, we also need to ask the question, "Who's the Word?" St. John says in the first chapter of his Gospel: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth...For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace" (Jn. 1:14, 16). The Word is Jesus Christ, the babe born in Bethlehem, the babe born to die for our sins. He is the Word Incarnate (in the flesh), come to rise from the dead, defeating death for us and offering a better, eternal life hereafter, a life we were meant to live. The Word is Jesus who was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary, who

considered it a great privilege to love us, even when we don't always love Him. He considered it an honor to communicate and talk and walk with humans, despite their shortcomings, faults, and imperfections. What's the Word? It is the Gospel message of the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, born as the Savior of men, of Immanuel (God with us). The Word made flesh communicates with us about hope, peace, comfort, value. These are graces upon graces.

That Word continues to speak to us today. Jesus speaks to all people through the Word of God that is read and studied at Holy Cross each week. We receive the flesh and blood of the Word made flesh at our altar. What's the Word? Come to Holy Cross and hear it. We have a Sunday morning service at 9:30 followed by Bible Study, Wednesday Prayer services at 12:00 p.m. followed by Bible Study, and Friday Stations of the Cross at noon. Additionally, we have morning prayer at 9:30 Tuesday-Saturday, and at 8:30 on Sunday. You can always stop in and speak with me, Vicar Silas Hasselbrook, from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday about anything you'd like. We also offer classes for youths and adults who are interested in joining Holy Cross, or learning more about the Christian faith. Our address is 5319 2nd Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA and our phone number is 412-521-0844. God bless you this month of December, and Merry Christmas!

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