

Edited by Ollie Rieley

Happy Holidays

As I write this, the weather has been pretty good. A few flurries and a few cold days, but also sunny. I hope the holidays have been good to you thus far.

I recently called a meeting of current and former Officers and Board members to discuss where the HPCC is heading and what it should be doing. I was late for the meeting, but it seemed like a good one. There will be follow-up meetings to continue to discuss the HPCC's purpose, structure and planning for 2005. Keep your eyes and ears open for discussion of what the focus of the coming year will be. If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to contact me.

I look forward to the cold and snow. There is nothing like a snow-covered street, where the trees and cars are covered with white, and having time to shovel snow. But please be careful walking and driving in it, and have a great Holiday season.

Plus, Go Steelers!

See you around the neighborhood!

Bob Staresinic, 931 Mellon Street, 412-441-8972, bob.63@netzero.net

So Long, Clara

Ollie Rieley

November 30 we lost our long time school crossing guard,Clara Venturino, a victim of the city's interminable fiscal crisis. She was offered the choice of retiring by November 30 at her full earned pension or continuing on with her earned pension decreased by half. She is of an age where the lost half could not be recovered before a reasonable age, so she elected to leave. I suppose in politics that's called a voluntary retirement.

She worked the difficult intersection of North Negley and Hampton St. In the morning rush hour, a continuous stream of vehicles from the Highland Park bridge and Allegheny River Boulevard flows down Negley hurrying to Oakland or Downtown. There are two Port Authority bus routes stopping at the corner. Twelve school buses stop there. And there are elementary schools in both directions down the side street.

As pedestrians approach the intersection, they are greeted by a friendly wave and a bright smile. Kids, Grandparents, strangers and old friends all get the wave and smile. It lights up the morning! Then someone needs to cross the street. She dons her mask of determination, raises her arm in warning, and steps off the curb stopping all traffic. For a school bus she goes diagonally to the middle of the intersection to assure nobody sneaks through in either direction. When the bus is ready, she steps back up onto the curb and resumes her smile and greetings.

I suppose we'll get a new guard; younger, cheaper for the city to employ. The city will save perhaps \$10,000 - 20,000 in lower salary and benefits. But the neighborhood will be much the poorer for her absence. It's a sad tale of mismanagement of the city's finance and lack of resolution and spirit of compromise by our leadership. I welcome any of those leaders who receive this newsletter to explain why she must go.

For what its worth: I remember Joe, my crossing guard at Euclid Heights Boulevard and Lee Road a lot better than any of my Elementary School teachers from 60+ years ago. He represented warmth, safety, friendliness on the way to and from school. Clara, I believe many of your charges will feel the same way about you in 50 to 75 years as I do about Joe.

Remember:

No December Meeting, No January Newsletter

See:

Concerts & Programs - Pgs 2 & 4 Blockwatch - Pg. 3 First Night Pittsburgh - Pg. 8

THE NEXT HPCC MEETING IS 7:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 2005, AT ST. ANDREWS

THE PITTSBURGH CAMERATA PRESENTS

"Ring Out, Ye Crystal Spheres" at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 5801 Hampton Street, on <u>Saturday, December 11 at 8:00 PM</u>. Poetry and music unite in a Christmas concert featuring readings from John Milton's "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity." The 24-voice professional chamber choir will sing Christmas music old and new between clastic form Milton's chamber of 15 and 80 selections from Milton's beautiful poetry. Tickets are \$15 and \$6 for students. 412-421-5884. For more information and a concert program listing, visit the Camerata's website at www.pittsburghcamerata.org.

Festival of Lessons and Carols

The Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Choir with George Tutwiler, Director will present a traditional Festival of Lessons and Carols on Tuesday December 14 at 7:30 P.M. Free and open to the public.

February HPCC Program

Arrangements are being made to bring representatives of CitiParks and the Pittsbugh Parks Conservancy to the February meeting to tell us about progress on the Welcome Entry to the park. Plan to attend. See the February newsletter for details.

Highland Park History Group

Rudy Maceyko

The first meeting of the Highland Park History group was held on Thursday, November 11 at St. Andrew's. We had a really good turn out, including members of the community who had things to say or show and also those who just came because they were interested in area history.

Those who attended heard about the upcoming centennial of the St. Andrew's church building, the progress of the national historic district nominations of the park and the neighborhood, and also about the East End/East Liberty Historical Society.

There were tons of old post cards, an old aerial photo of the neighborhood, an old map, other old photos, and a whole real estate map book of Pittsburgh from the first decade of the 20th century.

The next meeting of the history group will be in February at a date and location to be determined. If you are interested in the history group but are not on the email list for it or did not sign up at the first meeting, please let me know. If you have something to say or something to show, let me know about that too--there's still room on the agenda for February!

Contact: Rudy Maceyko, rm55@pobox.com, 412-441-9130



H. P. C. C. Officers, Directors & Committees

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C. O. P. 665-3644 - Zone 5 665-3605 HPCDC/HPCC Web: www.highlandparkpa.com Phone Numbers Area Code 412 unless Noted

School Board News

Patrick Dowd

The Board of Education for the Pittsburgh Public Schools is committed to providing the highest quality education for all children in the City of Pittsburgh. We are absolutely committed to offering students the opportunity to enroll in excellent classrooms at the age of three or four. We are eager to fund programs that help all students improve their reading and math skills. We are looking for ways to offer better career development to our middle and high school students. We are excited to build partnerships with groups to improve the quality of parent involvement and student achievement. In other words, the Board of Education is committed to expending taxpayer dollars for programs that assist students with improving their academic performance.

At the same time, however, the current Board of Education is equally committed to reducing the costs associated with public education. In essence, we believe that the Pittsburgh Public Schools can recognize increased efficiencies and eliminate wasteful spending. In 2004, we began the long difficult work of closing schools and aligning our physical resources with the city's population. We voted 8-1 to close 11 schools. This process was guided by our realization that the school district must utilize its great resources – physical plant, tax dollars, personnel – more efficiently. This Board will continue to search for ways to increase efficiency and reduce costs.

On November 10th, Superintendent John Thompson announced his proposed budget for 2005. His budget called for spending in excess of \$546 million. Having done little in the way of preparation with the Board, the Superintendent proposed a budget that increased expenditures by more than \$20 million over the 2004 budget. According to the Superintendent, some of these increased expenditures would be covered by the district's shrinking fund balance, some by a 22.5% increase in the real estate tax. President Isler spoke well for the Board when he said, "I can tell you that this Board is not thinking tax increase."

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Admittedly, the district faces cost increases beyond its control. Medical insurance costs, retirement contributions, charter school costs and crossing guard expenses are among the areas over which the Board and administration have little control. And in all areas, costs are rising. Contracts signed in previous years have also committed the district to increasing salaries. At the same time, the Board has voted for certain programmatic increases in an effort to improve student achievement. Still, while these and other costs have increased, the Board believes the administration should find areas where costs should be declining.

The budget proposed is just that, a proposal. Between now and late December, the budget is likely to change. Over the next few weeks, the Board will review carefully the proposed budget and will likely call upon the administration to reduce expenditures. The public can do the same. Copies of the budget are available in the Central Administrative Office (412.622.3600) and online at www.patrickdowd.org. As always, comments can be sent to me at Patrick@patrickdowd.org or by phone at 412.622.3770. I also receive mail at 314 South Bellefield Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

Blockwatch

Jan Stayianos (412 363-8208)

For those of you who don't attend HPCC meetings, I reported that the statistics for October in the categories of burglary and theft were down by almost half - I hope that means that more of you are being more diligent and locking your homes and cars.

Crime is usually down during the winter months, but not nonexistent. I want to remind you to watch out for each other. That's what block watch is all about. Call 911 if you witness any suspicious behavior. If you plan to be away for the holidays, make sure someone watches the house for you, stop newspapers and mail, use timers to show lights, have a neighbor shovel the snow, if it snows, etc.

Commander Brackney from Zone 5 tells us that many crimes are solved because of diligent citizens speaking up. Silent Complaint forms are being used by more people which also helps fighting crime. I always have Silent Complaint forms at HPCC meetings or you can pick them up at the Zone 5 Police Station.



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December and January at St. Andrew's

Bruce Robison

With best wishes to all in this great season of the year from all of us at St. Andrew's.

The later weeks of Advent and Christmastide are rich and busy ones around St. Andrew's, with many traditions services and events meaningful and fun for all of us, young and old.

For the younger set the traditional "Children's Pageant of Christmas" is offered at 11 a.m. on Sunday morning, December 19th--great fun for all, with music, costumes, and drama to retell the ancient story. Kids from the neighborhood who would like to take part are welcome, and asked to join us for the rehearsal on Saturday morning, December 18, at 10 a.m.

Young and old alike will enjoy the wonderful choral music of a traditional service of Lessons and Carols, offered by St. Andrew's Choir, under the direction of Peter Luley, at 4:30 p.m., on Sunday afternoon, December 19th. A reception follows.

Another highlight of the season for kids and families will be the "Carols around the Bonfire" holiday gathering, for folks from the parish and the neighborhood, with singing in the Churchyard followed by Christmas Cookies and hot chocolate in the Parish Hall. This year, 7 - 8 p.m. on Tuesday, December 21. All are welcome!

Christmas services at St. Andrew's will include the December 24, Christmas Eve Family Service at 4:30 p.m., with the Blessing of the Creche and Children's Sermon, a Christmas Eve Service of Music at 10:30 p.m., and the traditional Midnight Service at 11 p.m. On Christmas morning a service of Holy Communion in the Chapel is intended especially for those who prefer a simple celebration, or who have difficulty coming out in the evening.

And finally, on Friday, December 31, New Year's Eve, we gather in the Church at 11 p.m. for a brief musical program, then for a brief service of Holy Communion. Then at Midnight we go into the tower to ring in the New Year over parish and neighborhood with the tolling of the Great Bell.

A festive New Year's Eve Party, with champagne toast, follows in the Parish Hall, featuring music by our good friend and much-admired Pittsburgh folk singer, Brad Yoder. A great way to welcome 2005!

St. Andrew's, at the corner of Hampton Street and North Euclid Avenue, has been a part of this Highland Park neighborhood for nearly a century. We are glad to be of service in any way that we can. If there is a baby to be baptized, a marriage to celebrate, a sick or shut-in neighbor or family member who would appreciate a visit, a family to be supported at the time of the death of a loved one, we hope that all would feel warmly invited to give us a call. Or if you simply need to borrow a few chairs, or find a "rainy day" alternative location for a family picnic--we'll do what we can to make that happen. Our office hours are Tuesday-Friday, 9 a.m. noon, 1 p.m - 3 p.m., and the office phone is (412) 661-1245.

HPCDC Update and Outreach

David Hance, President, Jessica King, Vice President

The Highland Park Community Development Corporation will soon mark 12 years in our mission of neighborhood revitalization. Formed to partner with the Community Club to take on key, stubborn development challenges, we've faced both noteworthy successes -restoration of 5635 Stanton Avenue and leadership of the Highland Park Community Plan, for example-, as well as daunting challenges. Tackling some of the more difficult residential redevelopment properties in the City, recent years have been busy ones on the acquisition, design, funding, and partnership side. Moving these houses into "bricks and mortar" activity is the last remaining hurdle, and the process is underway. A major portion of the funding for 5 of our houses was just approved by the State, for instance, and we are truly excited about the coming months. Expect to hear more from us on this soon. On Bryant Street, revitalization carries real promise, and we will have progress to report to the Club in early 2005. At the State level, both the neighborhood and park are in final review for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. And in Highland Park itself we have been a key and leading partner in the Welcome Entry Fountain and Garden restoration now underway, as well as the very exciting planning efforts underway in Heth's Run that will connect the neighborhood and park to the river as never before.

The entire board of the HPCDC sees 2005 as a year that will return us to the roots of our existence, development of the troubled portions of the SW Quadrant. If you'd like to be part of this, we have a few, important positions open on the board. In particular, we are seeking individuals with expertise in accounting, real estate, and design/construction. Commitment to the neighborhood, and the willingness to lend some of your already valuable time and skills to making this an even better place are the values we place first, however. On the board, just as in the neighborhood itself, we strive for diversity. Please contact any board member, or give me a call at 361-4935 if you'd like to talk about this opportunity.

A final note: We hope to be coming to you soon with a letter expanding on some of these points, as well as to ask for your financial support in the operation of this neighborhood corporation. For those of you who are able to do so, and who would like to have your tax deductible contribution in before the end of 2004, please send your check to: Highland Park Community Development Corporation; P.O. Box 4866; Pittsburgh, PA. 15206.

January HPCC Program

Jan Stayianos has made arrangements for Timothy P. Snyder, executive director of the Parental Stress Center, to speak at the January 20, 2005 meeting. He will talk about the many programs that PSC provides to the community. Many people have no idea how many families are helped by their educational counseling and support services. Since they are a community oriented organization, we may learn how we can work together through volunteering and becoming involved in leadership opportunities.

THE WAY WE WERE... THOSE SIGNS

Pat Miller

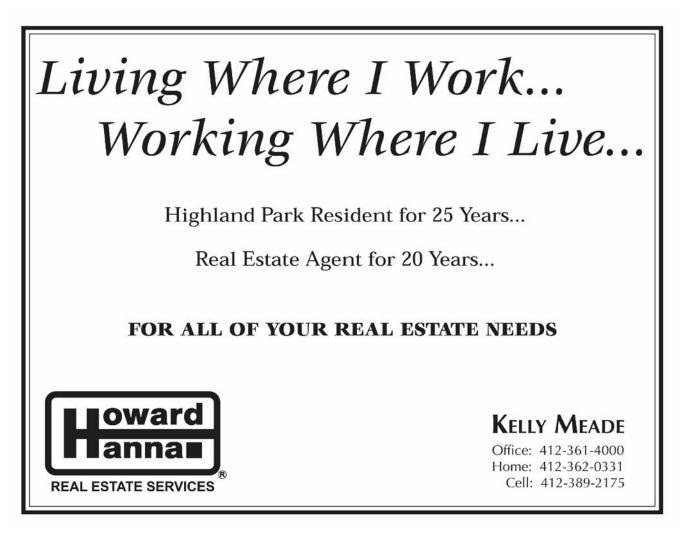
Compared to some residents of Highland Park I'm a relative newcomer, having only lived here for 19 years and I thought it would be interesting to look back at the history of this area or, as I call it, "the way we were". Let's start with those signs we've all seen. You know—the ones that say "Welcome to Highland Park—Settled in 1778". What exactly happened here in 1778 and what did our area look like?

Let's first go back a bit earlier—to 1753. That year a 21-year-old major in the Virginia militia named George Washington traveled through the area which is now downtown Pittsburgh but was then a wilderness. He was impressed by the confluence of the two rivers and thought that would be a good place to build a fort. His commanding officer thought that was a fine idea and early in 1754 the British built Fort Prince George at the forks of the Ohio. But the French, who were competing with the British for control of western Pennsylvania, had other ideas. A few months later they successfully attacked the little fort and, now under French control, it became Fort Duquesne. Four years later the British decided to try again and, under the command of General Forbes (sound familiar?) they ousted the French, took the fort and renamed it Fort Pitt.

So, although there was a fort worth fighting about, there were no settlers living in the wilderness that was to become East Liberty/Highland Park. Now fast forward to 1778. There was not yet a city or even a borough called Pittsburgh and Allegheny County didn't exist either. In 1778 it was still disputed whether our area was part of Pennsylvania or part of Virginia since both colonies laid claim to the land. They argued about it from 1774 until 1779 at which point they decided to stop fighting each other and devote all their energies to fighting England. They agreed that the Mason Dixon line would become the southern boundary of Pennsylvania, thus making Highland Park forever part of Pennsylvania.

Back in 1734 a man named Alexander Negley was born in Germany. He came to America when he was five and grew up in Bucks County. During the Revolutionary War he and his wife had some harrowing experiences with the Indians who sided with the British so he decided to leave Bucks County and move his family west. He reached our area in 1778 and decided to stay. He built a log home in what would become Highland Park. The Negley farm, named "Fertile Bottom", was built on the south bank of the Allegheny River. He and his family built other homes and were an important part of the community for many years. You'll hear more about the Negley family in other newsletters but Alexander, who died in 1809, is buried in Highland Park and a monument marks his grave.

Well, what do you think? Is Highland Park history interesting?



Meeting Highlights of November 18, 2004

Kate Carrigan

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Staresenic at 7:40 p.m.

Reports

Treasurer: Kelly Vitti reported there currently is a \$15,241 balance in all accounts.

Election: Jennifer Thoma was nominated for board member and elected.

Children's Committee: Rachel Matos reported the Harvest Party at the farmhouse was very a great success, about 150 children came. There were some problems with having enough volunteers but people pitched in once they were there. Experimented with the 12:30 to 2:30 time frame which was successful. Citiparks was very helpful with games, crafts and the inside use of the farmhouse. Thank You's will be sent to the Mayor's office and the councilman's office, perhaps a letter to the editor of the post-gazette.

Welcoming Committee: There was a general discussion of the role of the welcoming committee and what is needed for new residents such as CDC information, a personal letter, an HPCC application and the web site/ mailing list. Bob Staresenic is holding a meeting November 29 to review current and future programs of HPCC.

There was a general discussion regarding homeowners, renters and the HPCC. The mass mailing in July is supposedly sent to all residential addresses in the neighborhood but a few new members said they hadn't received it. Some other alternatives were discussed.

History Group: Rudy Mayceko reported the first of the History Group was held November 11 and the next meeting will be in February. Rudy is starting this group to provide a forum for studying the history of Highland Park

Blockwatch: Jan Stayianos reported there were seven burglaries, six thefts and one aggravated assault in the month of October.

General

On Mellon Street two more properties need to be cleaned up. The date the cleanup is to start is not yet known.

Furniture: It was noted that there is a need for list of agencies that will pick up furniture and recycle it to worthy causes rather than sending it to the dump via garbage pickup.

Graffitti: There was a long discussion of the need and methods to remove graffitti from posts on Highland Avenue and surrounding streets. It appears as if there is one person or group responsible for it.

Holiday Party: February 12 is the date of the HPCC party which will be held at Kelly Meade's home.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Union Project Christmas Sale Justin Rothshank

Union Project Announces Christmas Market

HPCC NEWSLETTER

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The Union Project, an east end non-profit organization that is restoring the former Union Baptist Church to provide gathering and working space for artists, community builders and people of faith, has announced the opening of a Christmas Market.

The Union Project has partnered with local farmers Neil Stauffer and Susanna Meyer on this innovative Christmas fundraiser. Christmas trees, wreaths, and other Christmas decorations will be on sale at the Union Project, on the corner of Stanton and Negley Avenues, beginning Monday, November 29 and continuing until Christmas. Hours will be 11am to 9 pm, 7 days a week.

Trees will be priced between \$20 and \$50, with proceeds going to benefit the Union Project restoration project. The Union Project will be selling a wide variety of trees including Frasers, Blue Spruce, Canaan, and Concolor. All trees are grown locally on a tree farm in Indiana County. Additionally, there may be opportunity to special order LIVE Christmas trees.

This unique Christmas market is a nice compliment to the Summer Arts and Farmers market that is offered at the Union Project every June thru September. The summer market provides opportunities for local farmers and artists to sell their wares, while at the same time providing free arts opportunities to children.

Volunteers are still needed to help staff the market. Volunteers are specifically needed from Dec 12 thru Dec. 18. If you would like to volunteer to help staff the market call 412-478-3105 or email justin@unionproject.org.

More information can be found at www.unionproject.org <http://www.unionproject.org> or by emailing trees@unionproject.org.

Pick Up Shady Ave. Magazine

Be sure to pick up the holiday issue of Shady Ave. Magazine. The Union Project is featured in an article on page 49.

Www.unionproject.org

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Handel's *Messiah* as it's never been <u>seen</u> before ...

An eye-opening new look at Handel's perennial Christmas treat *Messiah* (Part I), which blends this timeless musical classic with over 170 masterpieces of western art from the last eight centuries together with a choir of 40 voices, soloists and narration, all accompanied by a 25-piece orchestra. This special performance will be presented at East Liberty Presbyterian Church, Penn and Highland Avenues (East Liberty) on Sunday, December 19 at 7 pm in the church's magnificent gothic cathedral sanctuary.

Wedding the art with the music creates an emotional resonance for the listener, resulting in an experience that is more powerful than either the music or the art alone. The narrations set the scene for the individual scriptural texts Handel chose for both solos and choruses, highlighting the historic prophecies that spoke to the human condition of a by-gone age, but which are timeless in their message of hope even for a day such as ours.

Admission to the concert is \$10 for adults and \$5 for ages 18 and under. Tickets may be purchased through the East Liberty Presbyterian Church office or at the door on the day of the performance. Further information may be found on the church's web page <u>www.cathedralofhope.org</u> or by calling 412-441-3800. This concert is presented as part of East Liberty Presbyterian Church's 2004 Year-of-the-Arts programming. All proceeds will benefit the Restoration Fund for the church's Aeolian-Skinner pipe organ.

A Children's Committee Update:

Highland Park's 1st Annual Harvest Party was a huge success, with well over 100 children (and their adults) enjoying games, crafts, face painting, yummy treats, and more! Our thanks go out to all of those in Highland Park who helped by hanging flyers, providing snacks, volunteering to run games and crafts on Party Day, and cleaning up after! Big thanks also to the Citiparks Community Enrichment Program for the use of the Farmhouse, the art activities they provided for us, and for all of the many resources they made available to us for this event!

If you are interested in meeting your neighbors, making a difference for the kids of Highland Park, and HAVING FUN, then join the Children's Committee! (Remember, even 30 minutes of your time can make a big impact in your community!)

Contact: Rachel Matos, (412) 361-3802, highlandparkchild@hotmail.com



First Night Pittsburgh...Call for Interested Participants

Tania Grubbs

Greetings Neighbors: Are you interested in being a part of First Night Pittsburgh?

Puppetmaker and Parade Director Cheryl Capezzuti invites Highland Park/East Liberty neighbors to make large-scale creatures for this year's parade on New Year's Eve. Last year twelve families or so participated. We all had a fantastic time making art and getting to know our neighbors. The workshop and the entire parade will be inspired by the theme "Tales of Revelry and Peace." Participants should plan to attend the parade at 8:00 p.m. on New Year's Eve in Downtown Pittsburgh. Space is limited so register EARLY.

Details:

Who: Parents and Children together or community adults who want to participate.

What: Giant Puppetmaking for the First Night Parade.

When: Wednesday Evenings December 8, 15, and 22, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Where: Dilworth Traditional Academy for the Arts & Humanities. *Why:* To be a part a great Pittsburgh Tradition and make the parade a huge community success.

To Register: Contact Tania Grubbs @ off.ising@verizon.net or 412-661-4054.

The workshops are free but please plan to bring recycled shoe boxes, pop bottles, milk jugs and other cool junk to the first class.

Volunteers are also needed on First Night for the giant parade puppets and as parade marshals, if you are interested, email cheryl@strudiocapezzuti.com.

St. Andrew's Church

5801 Hampton Street * Highland Park

Sunday Morning Services - December

9:00 a.m. Holy Communion in the Chapel
11:00 a.m. Choral Morning Worship Church School at 9:45 a.m. Nursery School at 11:00 a.m.
Wednesday Morning Holy Communion 10:30 a.m.

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL!!

Daniel J. Landis

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DECEMBER – JANUARY CALENDAR	
TILL DECEMBER 24	CHRISTMAS MARKET, UNION PROJECT DAILY, 11:00 A.M 9:00 P.M.
DECEMBER 8, 15, 22	GIANT PUPPET MAKING FOR FIRST NIGHT, DILLWORTH TRADITIONAL ACADEMY, 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.
DECEMBER 11	PITTSBURGH CAMERATA, " RING OUT, YE CRYSTAL SPHERES", ST. ANDREW'S, 8:00 P.M., ADMISSION
DECEMBER 14	FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS, PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, 7:30 P.M.
DECEMBER 19	LESSONS AND CAROLS, ST. ANDREW'S, 4:30 P.M.
DECEMBER 19	MESSIAH, EAST LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 7:00 P.M., ADMISSION
DECEMBER 21	CAROLS AROUND THE BONFIRE, ST. ANDREW'S, 7:00 P.M.
DECEMBER 31	SERVICE, MIDNIGHT BELL RING AND PARTY, ST. ANDREW'S, 11:00 P.M.
JANUARY 20	HPCC MEETING, ST ANDREW'S, 7:30 P.M., PROGRAM BY PARENTAL STRESS CENTER