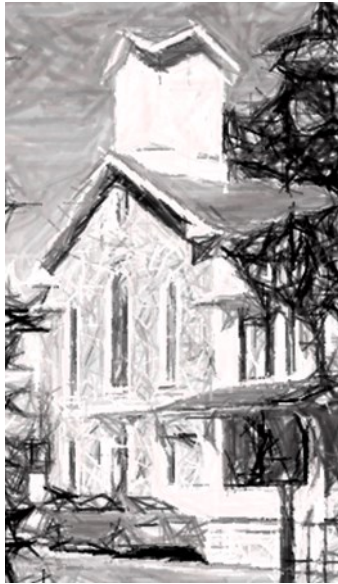




November/December
2024

O Come, All Ye Faithful



*The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep
darkness,
on them has light shone.*

- Isaiah 9:2 -

Come one, come all!

Come, and join us for a musical remembrance of the Reason for the Season. This **December the 22nd at 5:30pm**, the **Elverson Methodist Church** is hosting an outdoor Christmas carol event open to all. Fill the chill night air with songs of warmth and gladness. Musically inclined or not – the more the merrier! Just make a joyful noise.

Weather permitting, bring a wind-resistant candle, a flashlight, or a camp lantern, park at the Elverson Methodist Church or along the street, and walk to the Elverson Cemetery in the center of town. There we will join for a time of Christmas carols and merry melodies around the festooned evergreen trees. If the weather is poor, we'll meet indoors in the church's fellowship hall for indoor caroling. Light snacks and beverages will follow. Please bring something tasty to contribute – whether store bought or home baked. 'Tis the season for sharing.

*Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.*

“Hark, the Herald Angels Sing” (1739)

Merry Christmas, and God bless us, every one!

Thanksgiving—the Elverson Way of Life

Merle Stoltzfus

Thanksgiving is the greatest holiday of all! My wife, Diane, recently questioned my saying, “Thanksgiving is a religious holiday”. As usual, she is right because it doesn’t officially originate as religious. But I repeat how Thanksgiving is the best holiday because it invites each of us to engage in a life-changing exercise, even if practicing it less often than we could. Being thankful has immense benefits for both the receiver and giver. If possible, we should celebrate thanksgiving every day and as often as possible; all the time would be best. And since I’ve experienced some of the heart change of thankfulness, it sure affects me religiously.

Living in the greatest square mile in Pennsylvania should give all of us continual opportunity for the personal benefits of thanksgiving. However, being the greatest place in the state doesn’t mean we don’t have challenges. But with a thankful heart, even challenges can encourage added paths and ways to be thankful. Rightly seen, challenging times, less than annihilation, are never the worst they could possibly be. We have reason to be thankful.

Now, I’m not really that old (every older person says this) but I’ve lived long enough to notice how a lot of time in life is filled with continual, almost relentless small challenges. Every day I get out of bed and deal with the challenge of my morning breath. I shower and then comes the challenge to fix my hair. Most of us either clean glasses or install contacts. Clothes get dirty, furniture dusty and yards are a mess just in the normal course of the challenges of life. This continual drip of life repair can either frustrate us or remind us of how much harder life could be should we live like most in this world without clean water and appliances. Being thankful is therefore a perspective and something to be learned.

Also, I have noticed how life without challenges does not increase gratefulness. In fact, when everything is humming along and good, I’m less inclined to live in the moment and tempted to think of how much better things could be if I just had more. One would think the good life would engender thanksgiving but instead steers toward focus on what is lacking (coveting). This tendency alone should inform us how being thankful in every circumstance is great advice.



The cousins of thankfulness and contentment are more likely found in the hard places. Challenges slowing or stopping us to contemplate our blessings in our world of turmoil and confusion become beneficial and necessary tools of life. This kind of thinking about life’s trials really doesn’t naturally develop within our heart. If given the choice, we would never order hard things into our lives. But we need them and therefore it is most often the things outside our control which generate thankfulness within us.

Since giving thanks in everything, including the challenges of life, isn’t a natural tendency, I want to suggest a changed heart takes spiritual intervention. Our forefathers, when coming through very deep challenges like disease and death, established Thanksgiving Day. Religion is defined – “the belief in and worship of a superhuman power”. We may not call this a religious holiday but thanksgiving for everything, including challenges, can only be realized by something outside ourselves.

Since communities are primarily sustained because its people live together in harmony, in a large part, Elverson can continue as the greatest square mile when and because we practice thanksgiving as the Elverson way of life.

Religious or not, enjoy the best holiday and have a happy Thanksgiving!

Iron Plantation Christmas at Hopewell Furnace

The National Park Service (NPS) invites the public to celebrate an "Iron Plantation Christmas" and stroll through the historic community of Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site. This free event will take place on **Saturday, December 7, from 11**

a.m. to 3 p.m. and will feature Christmas as celebrated during the 19th century at Hopewell Furnace. The program will be presented rain or shine.

Visitors will have the opportunity to experience and engage with various Christmas traditions from the early/mid-19th Century. These activities include making gingerbread ornaments, creating holiday decorations out of greens and other natural sprigs, the traditions of writing holiday letters and cards, plus discovering the customs, foods, and traditions of the holiday season from an early American perspective. Visitors will also get to meet Der Belsnickel, a mischievous character similar to Santa Claus, who rewards good



children with treats. Support for these programs comes from park volunteers, the Berks and Chester County Master Gardener chapters, and the Friends of Hopewell Furnace.

Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site preserves the late 18th and early 19th century setting of an iron-making community, including the charcoal-fueled furnace, and its natural and cultural resources. This community illustrates the essential role of industrialization in the growth of the early United States.

The park's facilities are currently open Wednesday through Sunday, 9 am–5 pm. These facilities are closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Hopewell Furnace is located at 2 Mark Bird Lane, Elverson. For more information, call 610-582-8773 or visit the park website at www.nps.gov/hofu

ELVERSON VOTES!

In Chester County, 81.54% of registered voters, voted. In Elverson, the percentage was 85%. Numbers are as follows in the Borough of Elverson.

1,151 registered voters.

<u>Voting Method</u>	<u>Turnout</u>	<u>% registered</u>
Polling Place Turnout	699	
	60.73%	
Mail-in Turnout	284	24.67%
Total	983	85.00%



Preparing the Garden for Winter

Herb Hamilton, Tree Commission Chair

Winter is coming...and it's more than a Game of Thrones reference. Sorry, couldn't resist. This Fall has been very dry and we need to keep that in mind as we prepare our gardens for winter. Basic winter preparation is mostly about moisture, adding it and keeping it, with our focus on the smaller plants in our foundation beds.

Evergreen plants are the most susceptible to desiccation and they need to be well hydrated before winter arrives, so we need to water them now. Not sure what an evergreen is? It is any plant that keeps its leaves through the winter. For example, hollies and junipers. Water these plants for 10-15 minutes each. Let the water run slowly, you don't want to see it run off, we want this to soak in. Remember, focus on the smaller plants. If it's twice your height, move on.

Winter mulch is next. Everyone goes nuts in the spring and yet this time of year is equally important.



Add a little mulch to those thinning areas, especially near plants. It insulates the roots and helps the soil retain moisture.

To prune or not to prune. When it comes to your shrubs, don't. Winter pruning is for trees. We want to hold off pruning our shrubs until we get closer to spring. So don't trim your boxwood in winter. As for the rest of your shrubs, remember the adage, for spring flowers prune in summer, for summer flowers prune in spring.

Finally, clean and sharpen your tools. With a little care, good garden tools should last a lifetime. In fact, I have tools that I inherited from my father and father-in-law that I use to this day.

There you have it. Water and mulch your small evergreens, only prune your trees, clean your tools. Until Spring, happy gardening.

Thankful in Elverson

Esther Prosser, Elverson Mayor

I do not have to think hard to generate a list of what to be thankful for in Elverson. Compared to most of the rest of the world, we live in a safe, quiet and beautiful town. I do not have to wake up to gun fire, discomfort or fear. What a blessing!

Most recently, a few have disrupted our safe living with stealing cars and valuables inside of them—at least 7 or 8 reported to the state police the morning of November 19. This is a reminder to **lock up**, not something some of us have considered a priority.

I am thankful for our Elverson Neighborhood Watch Block Captain network which appoints an individual on each street in Elverson as the contact if something is worth reporting. In my opinion, this is more effective than any local police force and we don't need tax money to fund it. If you don't know who your Block Captain is on your street, please contact

me. Also, we have a few streets without Block Captains—most notably, Park Avenue and Wildflower Court. If you live on Park or Wildflower and would like to serve as Block Captain, please let me know.

I am encouraged by the involvement of our citizens in the most recent election. Eighty-five percent of registered voters in Elverson cast their vote on November 5, substantially higher than the national average. Thanks for participating in this most important democratic process.

There are many ways to become involved in Elverson. Besides helping to organize our parade (pictures on page 6), we have a lot of fun planning Elverson Day. Our Elverson Historical Commission is in need of leadership. If you love Elverson and history, you are perfect for this.

Our greatest square mile becomes greater as more jump in. Want to help? Contact me!
esther@stoltzfus.com, 484.269.7153.



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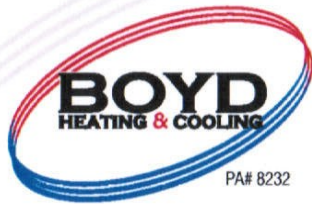
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Elverson Parade 2024 Theme—Advance to Go, Elverson, Celebrating our Favorite Board Games

