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THE WESTMINSTER LOG



CHRISTMAS EVE
Candlelight Services
1:00 & 7:00 P.M.

CAROLS AROUND THE ADVENT WREATH
12:40 & 6:40 P.M.

Join us on Christmas Eve for one of our candle lighting services. This year's services will be held at 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Twenty minutes prior to each of these services (12:40 and 6:40), those who wish are invited to gather outside in front of the church around the Advent wreath for a time to sing some of our favorite Christmas carols before proceeding inside for our Christmas Eve candlelight service.

CONTEMPLATIVE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Monday, December 20 at 6:00 p.m.

Refreshments will follow the service

The constant refrain on the radio and television, from shopping malls to churches, about the happiness of the season, about getting together with family and friends, reminds many people of what they have lost or have never had. The anguish of broken relationships, the insecurity of unemployment, the weariness of ill health, the pain of isolation — all this can make us feel very alone in the midst of the celebrating and spending time with others. Sometimes, we simply need a quiet place to sit with our thoughts, to be, and to worship. We need the space and time to acknowledge our feelings and concern; we need to know that we are not alone. We need encouragement to live the days ahead of us.

For these reasons, we are offering a special contemplative Christmas service on December 20 at 6:00 p.m. Join us as we worship together through prayer, scripture, and music that acknowledge that God's presence is forever with us — and that God's Word comes to shine light into our darkness. Everyone, regardless of church background (or lack of it) is welcome.

IMPORTANT DATES

Saturday, December 4 & 11

- 10:00 a.m. Children's Christmas Program Rehearsal

Sunday, December 12

- 10:30 a.m. Children's Christmas Program

Thursday, December 16

- 5:00 p.m. Children, Youth, & Adult Christmas Caroling

Sunday, December 19

- 10:30 a.m. Christmas Concert
- 4:00 p.m. Children & Youth Christmas Party

Monday, December 20

- 6:00 p.m. Contemplative Christmas Service

Friday, December 24

- 1:00 & 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve worship (Join us twenty minutes prior to each service to sing Christmas carols outside around the Advent wreath.)

Sunday, December 26

- 9:30 a.m. Pajamas & Pancakes

Sunday, January 9

- 11:30 a.m. Confirmation Informational meeting

DECEMBER 2021 ISSUE 157

WWW.WPCBC.ORG

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E-mail: office@wpbc.org
Office Hours:
Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Friday 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Visit us on Facebook:
Westminster Presbyterian Church - Bay City

- Pastor Rev. Jamie Milton (ext. 204)
- Parish Associate Rev. Linda Williams (ext. 203)
- Church Secretary Judy Harrelson (ext. 201)
- Treasurer Heather Heidman (ext. 206)
- Youth Director Brandi Higgins (ext. 208)
- Custodian Harold Miller (ext. 205)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
<h1>December</h1>	<p><u>Office Hours</u> Monday – Thursday: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Friday: 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.</p> <p>Website: wpcbc.org</p> <p><u>Join us on Facebook</u> Westminster Presbyterian Church - Bay City</p>	
<p>5</p> <p>9:00 a.m. First Light (Sunday School) 9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Time 10:30 a.m. Worship Service 11:30 a.m. Fellowship Time 5:00 p.m. Ignite (Youth Group)</p>	<p>6</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Deacon Meeting</p>	<p>7</p> <p>9:00 a.m. Bay ISD 10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 1:00 p.m. The Wired Word via Zoom 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts 6:00 p.m. Personnel Meeting</p>
<p>12</p> <p>9:00 a.m. First Light (Sunday School) 9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Time 10:30 a.m. Worship Service - Children's Christmas Program 11:30 a.m. Fellowship Time 5:00 p.m. Ignite (Youth Group)</p>	<p>13</p> <p>6:00 p.m. Finance Meeting</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9:00 a.m. Bay ISD 10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 1:00 p.m. Bay City Lions Club 1:00 p.m. The Wired Word via Zoom 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts 6:30 p.m. Joint Committee Meetings</p>
<p>19</p> <p>9:00 a.m. First Light (Sunday School) 9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Time 10:30 a.m. Worship Service - Christmas Concert 11:30 a.m. Fellowship Time 4:00 p.m. Children & Youth Christmas Party</p>	<p>20</p> <p>6:00 p.m. Contemplative Christmas Service</p>	<p>21</p> <p>9:00 a.m. Bay ISD 10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 1:00 p.m. Intergenerational Christmas Movie 7:00 p.m. Session Meeting</p>
<p>26</p> <p>9:30 a.m. First Light - Pancake Breakfast 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Time 10:30 a.m. Worship Service 11:30 a.m. Fellowship Time</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
<p>1</p> <p>6:00 p.m. Property Meeting 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p>2</p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 9:00 a.m. Bay ISD 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran 5:00 p.m. Combustion Counsel 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>10:00 a.m. Children's Christmas Program Rehearsal</p>		
<p>8</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p>9</p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 9:00 a.m. Bay ISD 1:00 p.m. Lydia Circle 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran 5:00 p.m. Combustion Counsel 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>10:00 a.m. Children's Christmas Program Rehearsal</p>		
<p>15</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p>16</p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 9:00 a.m. Bay ISD 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran 5:00 p.m. Christmas Caroling 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>		
<p>22</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p>23</p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Christmas Eve Worship 1:00 & 7:00 p.m. Sing carols outside around the Advent Candle 12:40 & 6:40 p.m.</p>	<p>25</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Merry Christmas</i></p>		
<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p><u>Happy Birthday</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>JeAnne Hebner George Greene Joy Thompson Ronald Deuscher Jerry Bechtel</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>Janice Van Nostrand Arthur Oettmeier Lois MacPhail Dianne Grabke</p> </td> </tr> </table>		<p>JeAnne Hebner George Greene Joy Thompson Ronald Deuscher Jerry Bechtel</p>	<p>Janice Van Nostrand Arthur Oettmeier Lois MacPhail Dianne Grabke</p>
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In October, the **Operating Fund** had income of \$28,730.07 and expenses of \$27,858.13. Some of these expenses included curriculum and materials for our new Follow Me Curriculum that is being used by both our Adults in their Bible Study classes and by our children on Sundays and Thursday evenings. The new curriculum is a big hit! We also had several Fellowship Events in October. We're so grateful we can be together again. The Mission Ministry gave a gift to the RL Jones Community Outreach Center in Flint, an organization that works with the underserved in Flint by providing food and water and helping with other needs. Food and supplies for our Food of Faith Program were purchased this past month. Thank you for your gifts and tithes to the General Fund.

Building Improvement Fund received contributions of \$655.85 and had a few expenses in October: a new dehumidifier was purchased for the Bell Choir Room, two air purifiers were purchased, and despite Harold's valiant effort to make the lawn mower last through the end of the season, Property approved purchasing a new one. (Harold is thrilled! It has cut his mowing time and is much easier for him to use and maneuver.) At the end of the month, the balance is at \$18,227.20. We're grateful to those who contribute to the Fund that allows us to make these improvements both inside the building and out!

The **Major Repairs Fund** had income of \$785.30 and no expenses for October. The balance at the end of October is \$51,618.92.

Contributions to the **Capital Campaign Fund** totaled \$5002.89 in October. This includes income from the Westminster Presbyterian Church Endowment. Our hope is that when the loan is re-amortized next October our loan payments will equal our endowment income from the WPC Endowment and the Bay Area Community Foundation Endowment, thus eliminating the need to ask the congregation for pledges to the Capital Campaign. Currently, the balance on the loan is \$299,572.84. Our goal is to have the principal at around \$206,000 when it is re-amortized. Thank you to everyone who has and who is continuing to give to the Fund and those who have pledged to the Capital Campaign in 2022!

End of Year Information

- Envelopes for 2022 will be available for pick up here at the church starting the first week of December.
- Contributions that you would like credited for 2021 MUST reach me (or be postmarked) by December 31, 2021. Anything I receive or postmarked after December 31, regardless of the date on your check or your envelope, will be credited to 2022.
- Year-end statements will be mailed or emailed around the second week of January. Look over your statement carefully. If I've made an error, please let me know immediately, so I can make the correction and begin closing the books on 2021.
- Heading to a warmer climate this winter? Have you moved recently? Do you have a new email address? Please call the church office to let us know of these changes so your statement and other church correspondence reaches you.
- Per capita for 2022 is \$29.00. This is per active, confirmed member. Please do not pay your 2022 Per Capita until January 1st or after. If you have not paid your 2021 Per Capita (\$28.76) you can still get that in this month.

It is a pleasure to serve as your Church Treasurer. As always, if you have questions or concerns, do not hesitate to give me a call or send me an email.

Heather Heidtman
treasurer@wpcbc.org
 989-225-5718



FELLOWSHIP TIME

Join your church family for a time of fellowship before and after Sunday's worship service.

Coffee and donuts included!

Condolences

Earl D. Bibbee



Prayers are extended to the family and friends of Earl Bibbee. Earl passed away on Wednesday, November 17, 2021. A memorial service will be held at a later date.



I want to take a moment to thank all the people who helped to make our Commitment Celebration an enjoyable time. The members of the Stewardship Committee: Julie Kelly, Sally Calvo, Heather Heidtman, Phil Reagh,

and Pastor Jamie Milton spent many hours over the past six months to make our efforts to inform our church family and celebrate them successful.

I also want to thank Harold Miller, Dawn Reszke, and Diego Calvo for their work on the day of the celebration. Penny Reagh for her assistance on Saturday and Sunday, and Karen Irvine (Sally's sister) for helping us with decorating on Saturday. Thank you, Judy Harrelson, for your help with office work and Sunday slides. Thank you, Emily Morse for help with Facebook posts. Thank you to David Kelly for helping his mom, Julie, bring in punch supplies and for waiting patiently on Saturday morning while we pulled everything together. I'm sure I've forgotten someone who was working behind the scenes. It takes so many helping hands.

A huge thank you to you, the Westminster Presbyterian Church Family, for all you do to further the work of God inside and outside of our walls. Stewardship takes all of us giving our treasure, our time, and our talents!

Karen Schoepach



Thank you so much for recognizing my brother Ross Wayne Brown for 50 years of church membership. He was thrilled to get a boutonniere and hung the certificate in his room. Ross and his four housemates were also thrilled to get a delicious chicken lunch from Ross's church (especially the pie!), including Jeff Bills, who is also a member of Westminster. Although Ross can't get out anymore, he is grateful to hear from his church family. Thank you to everyone who made this special event possible.

Sincerely,
 Karen Brown-Fackler



Westminster's Stephen Ministry program is venturing into volunteering with Hospice. We would like to invite anyone in the congregation to join us. Your time commitment is up to you. The Hospice co-ordinator is great to work with, and will assign you with the job that best suits your interests and time. There will be a training session after Christmas for us all to do together. Please call Jan Witucki (989-686-1557) or Pam Monville (989-225-8259) for more information or to be put on the volunteer list.



This Advent season as we follow Jesus, we will cultivate the practice of hope. The author of our study material this month, Dr. Charlene Jin Lee, writes:

“When chaos imposes fear on our unsuspecting lives, it is hope that pulls us up and guides us forward. When our own resources of will, courage, material possessions, or powers of positive thinking are not enough to carry us through the opaque chaos of life’s inevitable storms, we learn that hope is not something we can conjure up from within — no matter how naturally an optimist one might be.

“Christian hope does not rely on our human will and insight, good luck, or a thousand positive thoughts to keep us buoyed when pain lodges in our path. Hope beyond hope comes from the faithfulness of God... When we are lost and can’t feel the ground beneath us or see the destination ahead, we will find hope when we turn to our right and to our left, look above and beneath us, gaze ahead and look behind us. We will see God. We will meet Christ — God with us. We will stretch out our searching hands and find that Jesus has already taken hold of us.”*

First Sunday of Advent - Hear Hope (November 28)

The promises God gives to the Israelite community provided hope for them in difficult times of occupation and exile. We begin our Advent journey by hearing anew the hope we have in God who will never leave us or forsake us.

Second Sunday of Advent - See Hope (December 5)

Some days, hope can be easy to find, while on other days, it may be harder to see, especially when we feel troubled, lost, or filled with grief. When hope is hard to see, we can be reassured of this good news: Jesus Christ, the light of the world, is always with us.

Third Sunday of Advent - Share Hope (December 12)

Our children and youth will share with us the hope found throughout the story of Scripture, arriving at the birth of Christ, Emmanuel, God with us.

Fourth Sunday of Advent - Proclaim Hope (December 19)

The hope we have through faith in Christ is not for us alone, but meant to be proclaimed to all the world! Through scripture, song, and spoken word, we will proclaim to the world the One in whom we hope.

Christmas Eve - Live Hope (December 24)

Hope is here! Christ’s birth means that God is with us and has come to show us what it means to put our faith and our hope into action. The Christmas story invites us to live our hope, to be that hope, and share it with a world in need of the hope we have in our loving God.

1st Sunday of Christmas - Celebrate Hope (December 26)

Our celebration of Christmas continues as we welcome Christ into our hearts, and into our world.

*from Follow Me: Hope. © 2021 Growing Faith Resources, Louisville, Kentucky

CONFIRMATION CLASSES

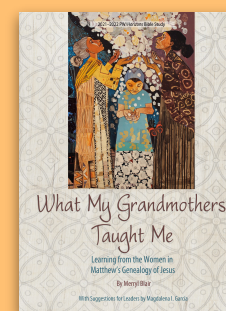
Our Confirmation Class will be starting up in early 2022. Students eighth grade and above who have not yet completed the confirmation process are invited to be a part of this important journey of faith. We will be discussing many different aspects of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ, an active member of this congregation, and a part of the larger Christian Church.

Our classes will take place on Sunday evenings from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. An informational meeting will be held for interested students and parents following worship on January 9. If you know you would like to take part in the class please contact Pastor Jamie.

Tree Dedication in Honor of Lois MacPhail and in Memory of Gordon MacPhail

Sunday, November 7, 2021

The Mission Partnerships Committee arranged to have a tree planted in honor of Lois MacPhail and in memory of Gordon MacPhail for their many years of dedicated service to the Food of Faith program at Westminster. The tree is planted in Veterans Park in Bay City, Michigan.



LYDIA CIRCLE

DECEMBER 9 There will be no
1:00 P.M. cookie exchange

Lydia Circle will meet monthly in person on the second Thursday at 1:00 p.m. in the Session room.

We will use the *Horizons Bible Study, What My Grandmothers Taught Me: Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus.*

“Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary—Matthew names these women for a reason. How might Jesus have heard the stories of his grandmothers? What might the young Jesus have felt as he heard about his family? What might the stories of these women have added to his sense of identity, as part of a particular family in a particular time and place?”

Have you thought about Jesus’ grandmothers? What can these Grandmothers-of-the-Faith teach us? Their stories will lead us into the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ. By exploring these stories together, we will have a richer idea of what the good news is.”



DEBORAH CIRCLE

Deborah Circle will NOT meet in December. Meetings via Zoom will resume in January.

If you have any questions about Deborah Circle or are interested in joining, please call Karen Schoeppach at 989-684-1322 or email her at kaysue@chartermi.net.

The Book of Common Worship introduces the celebration of All Saints' Day by reminding us that "All Saints' Day was established as an opportunity to honor all the saints, remembered and forgotten, known and unknown." In 2020 and 2021, the Westminster family has lost many of our own saints, and we have been unable to celebrate and honor their lives in the ways that we have been used to.

On Sunday, November 7, we took a few moments to celebrate those saints and remember their lives with us. For each member we had lost in 2020 and 2021, we read their name, showed a picture, and lit a candle in their memory.

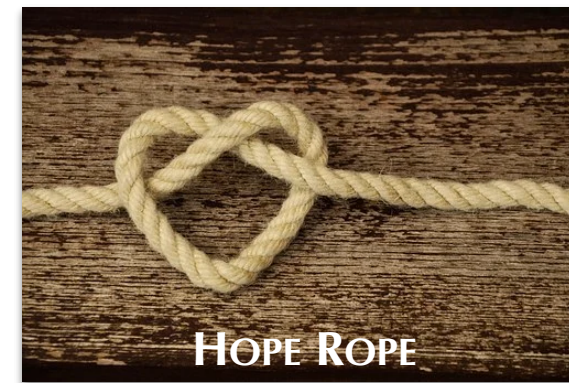


2020

James E. Belknap
Charlotte J. Blumenstein
Gloria M. Bublitz
Carol M. Castrodale
Paul M. Dannesberger
Conrad J. Drescher
Frances A. Ferdinand
Terrelene A. Hovis
Joyce M. Hunt
Marian L. Larive
Beverly J. Martin

2021

Rev. Dr. David B. Castrodale
JoAnne I. Deuscher
Edith E. Elliot
Candice K. Green
Robert J. Hanson
Gregory M. Kish
Donald N. Stokes
Joyce E. Wachowiak



The days and weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas can feel pressured with too many things to do — too much shopping, too much cooking, baking, trimming, too much.... And so, making the time for spiritual reflection and grounding can help make this time of the year even more meaningful as we anticipate and *hope* in the birth of Jesus.

Hope is waiting in faith. It is not merely wishing for something to happen, hoping that everything will work out, or if the stars align. Hope is waiting with anticipation — at times with impatience — for what you know believe is coming.

Think of hope as a lifeline rope that farmers use in the Great Plains during white-out blizzards to help them move between their barn and their house. The rope, attached to two buildings, is what the farmer holds in navigating the blinding and windswept path between two points of safety. (Parker Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life*). One of the Hebrew words for *hope* is *tikvah*, which in the noun form means "rope" or "strong cord." Like the rope that farmers hold to find their way home, hope is something outside ourselves that tethers us to God. When we can't find our way, holding on to that rope gives us hope that God is there.

Christian hope is found in the ever-present God, who is always with us. It is based on trust in God and in God's promises. When we are lost and can't feel the ground beneath us or see the destination ahead, we find hope when we turn to our right and to our left, look above and beneath, gaze ahead and look behind. We will see God. We will meet Christ, God with us, *Immanuel*. We will stretch our searching hands and find that Jesus has already

taken hold of us. Our hope comes from Jesus Christ. Our hope is Jesus Christ.

During the four sessions of Advent, we have the opportunity to take the time to reflect on the "reason for the season." Even if you do not regularly participate in one of our church's Bible studies, we invite you to consider this four-week "HOPE-filled" study.

Week of November 28 – "Hear Hope"

With the generations of God's people who have heard the words of prophets and faithful followers, which proclaim hope in God's power and presence.

Week of December 5 – "See Hope"

As we reflect on how we as Christians — then and now — claim that Jesus is the light of the world, offering hope even on the darkest nights and most difficult of days.

Week of December 12 – "Share Hope"

Reminds us of the communal dimensions of hope and encourages us to share hope with those who need it and borrow hope from others in our hard times.

Week of December 19 – "Proclaim Hope"

As followers of Jesus, we take our place as part of God's unfolding plan, speaking words of hope to one another and to the world.

To accommodate people's various schedules, we will continue to offer classes at two times – **Sunday mornings** at 9:00 before church, meeting in the Session Room and again on **Wednesday evenings** at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. The same materials will be used at both gatherings. Discussion will be led different weeks by Pastor Jamie and Rev. Linda.

The Adult Reflection Guide is available in the office. Remember each unit is a complete theme, so if you are not able to make a commitment to a two or three month, just join in for one unit at a time.

Any questions, please contact Pastor Jamie or Rev. Linda at the church office.

The Wired WORD

An Adult Curriculum

“Where current events and faith intersect.”

The Wired Word continues to meet every Tuesday afternoon at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom.

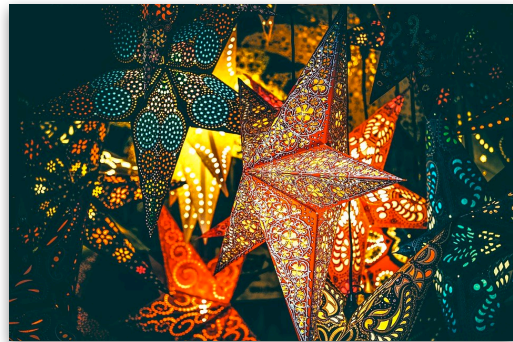
News is inevitable — whether it be good or bad, but what better way to extract hope from this input, than to juxtapose Scriptures as tools to persevere and navigate our daily walk in Christian faith. How often do we hear others — or even ourselves — say, “I just don’t want to watch the news anymore,” tired of stories that leave us feeling uneasy and at times helpless?

Our weekly The Wired Word gatherings — rather than leaving us hopeless — allow us to reflect on the week’s happenings with others who may not share exactly our same thoughts and opinions, but are equally dedicated to thinking about and talking about how current events intersect with our faith questions and convictions.

The lesson materials are emailed out several days in advance of the Tuesday afternoon gathering. Or if you prefer, the materials are printed in the office by Judy and are available to be picked up Friday or Monday morning.

In addition to the opportunity to participate in a lively discussion each week about faith and news, the group also enjoys the opportunity to connect with friends.

If you have any questions and/or would like to be added to the email list, please call Rev. Linda 686-1360 X2 or email at parishassoc@wpcbc.org. Remember each week discuss a new topics, so please feel free to pick and choose what interests you. Our website posts the new topic for the week.



Advent Reflections

The hustle and bustle that comes this time of year can wear a person out physically and emotionally. It’s amazing what a few minutes of quiet reflection can do! Starting

November 28 and for the next three Sundays of Advent, there will be a basket with blank composition books and slips of paper with “inspirational thoughts” written on them.

You are invited to take a book and a “thought” home. Find five or ten minutes (or more if you are able) and use the inspiration to prompt your thoughts. Then, write them down in the book. It can be quite relaxing to have a “conversation” with yourself as you write down whatever comes to mind. For your eyes only, unless you wish to share. Look for new inspirational thoughts each Sunday of Advent. Relax and reflect away!

From your Spiritual Growth and Formation Ministry

IMPORTANT BELL DATES TO REMEMBER

November 28
Chime Choir

December 5
Junior Bells

December 19
Little Ringers
Adult Handbells



Children’s Christmas Program

Sunday, December 12
10:30 a.m.



Additional rehearsals
will take place on
Saturday, December 4
&
Saturday, December 11
at 10:00 a.m.

Thank to all the volunteers
who helped make the Harvest
Festival a wonderful success!

Janelle Ballard
Nancy Dobson
Chris Elzinga
Brain Graves
Sandy Graves
Jack Gustafson
Heather Heidtman
Brandi Higgins
Gregg Higgins
Pam Johnston
Karen Kayner
Amelia Majchrzak
Tom Majchrzak
Harold Miller
Jamie Milton
Pam Monville
Len Petroff
Sheryl Petroff
Judy Randall
Penny Reagh
Phil Reagh
Dawn Reszke
Nicole Rezler
Tim Rutzen
Karen Schoeppach
Tami Sivy
Faith Sneller
Leah Sneller
John Tapley
Martha Tapley



Christmas Caroling

Christmas Caroling with children
and youth will take place on
Thursday, December 16 from
5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

Adults are welcome
and encouraged to join!



Children & Youth Christmas Party

Sunday, December 19
4:00 p.m.

Ignite will not join together in fellowship at its usual time on December 19. Instead, all children and youth will meet at 4:00 p.m. for “A Night in Bethlehem.”

Pajama and Pancake Day

Sunday, December 26
9:30 a.m.

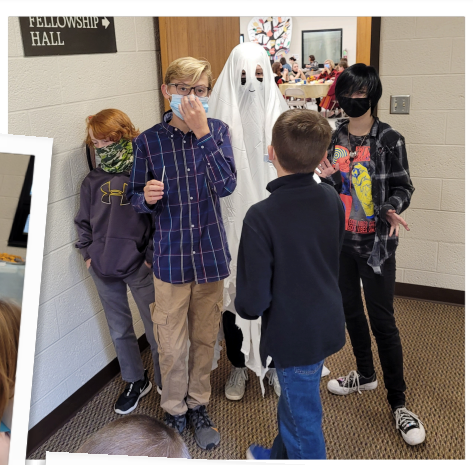
Lots of pancakes and fun before
the 10:30 a.m. worship service.





Family Harvest Party

Sunday, October 31, 2021



Congratulations

to Sandy Graves for winning the chili contest!
The judges, pictured below...



To continue supporting our quest as life-long learners, the Spiritual Growth and Adult Faith Formation Committee is offering a **monthly** series that will help us generate new ideas and get to know more about ourselves and others.

We will meet most months on the last **Tuesday at noon** in Fellowship Hall. Bring a brown-bag lunch if you desire; we will supply the beverages (coffee and water) and a simple sweet treat like brownies or cookies. If you are more comfortable not eating with others because of COVID precautions, you are still very welcome to come and be present as we listen to our various speakers. We will meet in Fellowship Hall, socially distanced and wearing masks.

Stay tuned for more details in future Logs and bulletins. In the new year — 2022 — we are securing other speakers for the **monthly Lunch and Learn**. Speakers like a rabbi, an Imam, a representative of the NAACP, and a speaker from the Mental Health Community will talk about anxiety, depression, and addiction.

Thank you to our Lunch & Learn hostesses!
September: Sheryl and Len Petroff
October: Anne Remington and Alicen Rogers

Lunch & Learn will gather on the last Tuesday of the month at noon in Fellowship Hall.

“ANATOMY OF A CRIMINAL CASE: FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE BENCH”

Tuesday, November 30

A federal magistrate judge and local attorney discuss a day in court. Don't miss this intriguing and current event topic planned for November's Lunch & Learn program, beginning at noon on November 30, 2021 in Fellowship Hall at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Presenters are Honorable Charles Binder (ret.) and Prosecuting Attorney, Patrick Duggan (ret.)

All are welcome to attend, including those on a lunch hour break from work. Bring a lunch to enjoy during this talk. Refreshments will be available. And if you prefer, you may bring your own comfortable lawn chair. For information call 989-686-1360, Westminster Church Office.

“THE STAR”

Tuesday, December 21 at 1:00 p.m.

For many people, the holiday season feels like it is not quite complete without watching a favorite movie with family or friends. It becomes a tradition. This year we are hoping here at Westminster to establish a new tradition — an **intergenerational holiday movie event**.

On **Tuesday, December 21** — when the kids have already started Christmas break — we will gather in Fellowship Hall at **1:00 p.m.** to watch the movie, “The Star.” It's about a small but brave donkey named Bo who yearns for a life beyond his daily grind at the village mill. One day he finds the courage to break free, embarking on the adventure of his dreams. On his journey he teams up with Ruth, a lovable sheep who has lost her flock, and

Dave, a dove who has lofty aspirations. Along with three camels and some eccentric stable animals, Bo and his new friends follow the Star and become accidental heroes in the greatest story ever told — the first Christmas.



In addition to just the fun of all being together to watch a movie, we will enjoy snacking together — popcorn, soda, and of course Christmas cookies. If you are an adult who loves to make Christmas cookies or a family who likes to bake together, you are welcome to share your tasty treats with the whole group.

Any questions, please call the church office, Brandi Higgins, or Rev. Linda.

Each month the Spiritual Growth Committee will share in the Log, a few thoughts on the journey of grief that we all experience. We hope these brief thoughts will be of help and support to all.



"Sometimes only one person is missing and the whole world seems depopulated."

Alphonse de Lamartine

Grief during the holidays serves up the perfect storm, where joyous memories clash with reality and expectations. Celebrations between the months of November and January are sandwiched together, a virtual laboratory of ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. No wonder grievers dread this time of year.

Several factors work against grievers during the holiday season. Daylight is waning and the nights are getting colder. People sensitive to these subtle changes may feel sluggish and retreat indoors. Just getting out of bed in the morning may feel like a major accomplishment. Then, too, the holiday season is awash with memories which can be confusing as well as painful. Reminders are everywhere. Decorations, music, fragrances, people, places, and traditions — the list goes on and on. Anything can trigger a memory and an unexpected surge of emotion.

When you're grieving the death of a loved one, you're likely to

feel out of step with the rest of the world. Mail continues to arrive for your loved one and a simple trip to the grocery store provides a sober reminder that you're not in sync with the season. Uplifting music is piped throughout stores as employees smile and urge you to "have a happy holiday."

Grievers are encouraged not to associate the word "perfect" with the holidays. The truth is that holidays and special days do challenge personal as well as family equilibrium. They stimulate and stress us. If you are honest with yourself, maybe the holidays were always stressful, even before the death of someone you loved, and now there's a hole in the fabric of the family.

You have a choice. You can choose to believe that this holiday season can still be a significant time for you. It will be different because you are grieving, but it can also be a meaningful time with others. It may hurt, but it may also hold hope.

Planning Ahead for Holidays

One of the best ways to survive the holidays after the death of someone you loved is to plan

ahead. Regardless of what you do, there is no way to avoid having to deal with pain and sadness. No one can offer you a way around this and despite the temptation, try to avoid canceling the holidays altogether. Accept the fact that parts of the holiday are not going to be easy. They will be different because life is now different, but keep these points in mind:

Set realistic expectations of yourself. Grieving takes energy. Be gentle with yourself and your family and allow yourself to take whatever time for yourself that you need.

Surround yourself with people who love and support you. Find those people who accept your feelings, who understand that the holidays are more difficult, and who allow you to express all that you are feeling.

Talk about your grief and about the person who has died. Share your feelings and memories with people you trust. Say the person's name and invite others to do the same.

Don't get caught up in unreasonable expectations. Losses and separations of all kinds make this a difficult season. For many of us, the holidays produce more stress and pain than joy. In light of this, there's no reason for guilt or for wondering if your grief is "ruining" the holidays for others. You don't need to provide the perfect holiday for anyone.

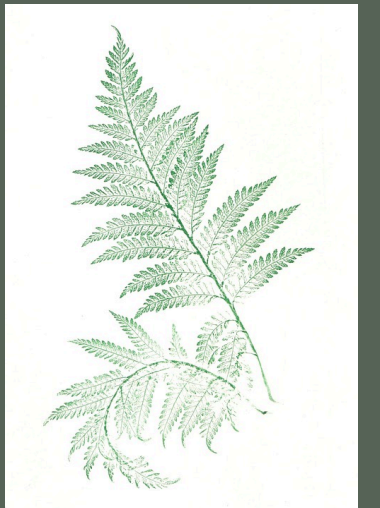
Wholeness

At times I have heard about people who say, after the loss of a loved one, "I can't go on without them," or, "My life will never be whole again." I have also read comments from people that this is true. When a loved one dies, you are never whole again. Whole, meaning unbroken, uninjured, intact, or undiminished. You are now, somehow, incomplete in a way. Your "wholeness" is no longer there. Yes, life is not the same. Your world has changed. However, "wholeness" doesn't mean "back to who you were." You can't go back to how you were when the one you lost was here with you. You can't go back to how you were before you had them in your life. You can, however, be a whole person again by living your life to honor that loved one. What did they really love in their life? Support their favorite charity. Start a scholarship at their high school in their name. Did they love being at preschool or daycare? Donate toys or needed items in their name.

Were there others in your loved one's life? If there were others who suffered the loss of this person, you owe it to them to consider their pain, their loss of feeling "whole". What does it say to the other people in your life if you can't see yourself as a whole person after this loss? Is their presence in your life meaningless? Does their place in your world count for nothing? Don't you owe it to them to rebuild your life? Would the person you lost want you to forget about the other people in your life? How would they feel if they knew you thought your life had no meaning if they weren't in it?

Of course, you miss them. Of course, you grieve for them. The loss can seem too much to bear. But don't let it destroy your "wholeness" forever. Savor your memories. Remember why you loved them. Remember why they held that place in your life and build a new place for them in it. I think to myself, "If they came back for a visit, would they be proud of the person I am?" It isn't what their death has done to me. It is what their living did for me.

Karen Schoepf



Embrace your memories.

Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after someone dies. Sharing and hearing stories, crying, and laughing together keeps the person who died part of these special days.

Take care of yourself. Avoid using alcohol or drugs to self-medicate your mood. Physical exercise is often a healthier antidote for sadness or depression.

Create a new tradition or ritual that accommodates your current situation. Some people find comfort in the old traditions while others find them unbearably painful. Discuss with your family the activities you want to include or exclude this year.

Tell others what you need. Make them aware of the times that may be particularly rough for you and make suggestions on ways they can support you.

Seek comfort in your faith. If your faith is important, seek out a familiar and supportive community to provide solace.

Remember that your grief is important and unique. Be patient with yourself, love yourself and don't let anyone take away your grief. Do know that there are times, despite your best efforts when nothing will seem to work. So remember — be gentle with yourself and your family.

