

THE WESTMINSTER LOG



In Genesis 31 we have the story of Jacob heading back to his home. Jacob ranted about his father-in-law, Laban, to his wives (Laban's daughters) who agreed with Jacob's sentiments. So, Jacob gathered

together his belongings and leaves. But as they were leaving, Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife, steals her father's household gods.

The Bible is full of these types of stories, and this is just one story of our faith! Now, like so many family stories, we seem to repeat them over and over. This particular story gives us several life lessons to look at about our own lives.

What's also interesting is that while Laban is searching for his stolen gods, Rachel doesn't even flinch while hiding them. She even calmly says to her father, "Dad, please don't be angry with me for not getting up; I'm having my period." Laban just takes his daughter's explanation and continues his search, even though he doesn't find his idols. (Genesis 31:35)

After a week of hard traveling, Laban has caught up to Jacob, and he admonishes him first for leaving without saying goodbye and then accuses him of stealing his gods. Why couldn't Laban have simply said, "Jacob – my household gods are missing. Is there any chance someone might have mistakenly taken them? Do you mind if I take a look?" But no! Laban doesn't use the calm approach. He blows up and makes matters worse!

After all is said and done, I give Laban credit; he's the one who steps back and de-escalates the situation. In spite of the fact that he's the offended and grieved party, he found a way to maintain a good relationship with his son-in-law. For Laban, the relationship was the most important thing!

Jacob also could have taken the calm approach, but he didn't. He escalated the situation — loudly proclaimed his innocence, while Rachel hides the gods she stole by sitting on them.

Sometimes we need to follow that example in our own lives. Sometimes we need to set aside pride and hubris and take on humility and grace. Sometimes we need to think about what is more important in life — the relationship!

— Rev. Dr. J. Ewen Holmes

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Where did the summer go? A question so many of us are asking. But Fall will soon be here and it is that time of year when we plan for new Spiritual Growth — Christian Education opportunities. We all know that planning and opportunities are different this year as we make accommodations for pandemic social distancing precautions. Zoom has been both a blessing and some would say a bust. It certainly has meant we

can still connect and see one another, but it also has been bittersweet when it reminds us of how much we miss seeing each other up close.

But we want to remain faithful, care for each other, and continue to provide opportunities for Bible study and conversation opportunities. So, we will need to

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Watch our sermons on our website!



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8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
(Closed for lunch noon - 1 p.m.)
Friday
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

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- Rev. Linda Williams (ext. 203)
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Church Secretary
- Heather Heidtman (ext. 206)
Treasurer
- Nikelle Johnson (ext. 208)
Christian Education
- Harold Miller (ext. 205)
Custodian

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday |
|---|---|---|
| <i>September</i> | <p>We invite you to contribute to Westminster's Monday & Thursday devotionals. Contact the church office at 686-1360.</p> | <p>1 Check out our website or Facebook for <i>The Wired Word</i> material for Thursday's Zoom meeting.</p> |
| <p>6 10:30 a.m. Worship Service [Join us in person (limit of 50 people in the sanctuary, 25 in Fellowship Hall) or join us via livestream through Facebook or YouTube.</p> | <p>7 Check out our website or Facebook for a new devotional.</p> | <p>8 Check out our website or Facebook for Bible Study material for Thursday's Zoom meeting.</p> |
| <p>13 10:30 a.m. Worship Service [Join us in person (limit of 50 people in the sanctuary, 25 in Fellowship Hall) or join us via livestream through Facebook or YouTube. 11:30 a.m. Ice Cream Social (to be held outdoors)</p> | <p>14 Check out our website or Facebook for a new devotional.</p> | <p>15 Check out our website or Facebook for Bible Study material for Thursday's Zoom meeting. Session Meeting via Zoom - 7:00 p.m.</p> |
| <p>20 10:30 a.m. Worship Service [Join us in person (limit of 50 people in the sanctuary, 25 in Fellowship Hall) or join us via livestream through Facebook or YouTube.</p> | <p>21 Check out our website or Facebook for a new devotional.</p> | <p>22 Check out our website or Facebook for Bible Study material for Thursday's Zoom meeting. Book Club Meeting via Zoom - 6:00 p.m.</p> |
| <p>27 10:30 a.m. Worship Service [Join us in person (limit of 50 people in the sanctuary, 25 in Fellowship Hall) or join us via livestream through Facebook or YouTube.</p> | <p>28 Check out our website or Facebook for a new devotional.</p> | <p>29 Check out our website or Facebook for Bible Study material for Thursday's Zoom meeting. Spirituality of Aging (time and format to be determined)</p> |

| Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p>2 Check out our website or Facebook for a recorded Midweek Chat or Bible Study</p> | <p>3 Check out our website or Facebook for a new devotional. <i>The Wired Word</i> Adult Formation Class via Zoom - 7:00 p.m.</p> | <p>4 Check out our website or Facebook for a <i>New Voices... New Verses...New Writers</i> writing prompt</p> | <p>5</p> |
| <p>9 Check out our website or Facebook for a recorded Midweek Chat or Bible Study</p> | <p>10 Check out our website or Facebook for a new devotional. Adult Formation Class via Zoom - 7:00 p.m.</p> | <p>11 Check out our website or Facebook for a <i>New Voices... New Verses...New Writers</i> writing prompt</p> | <p>12</p> |
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| <p>30 Check out our website or Facebook for a recorded Midweek Chat or Bible Study</p> | <p>Office Hours Monday – Friday: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Closed for lunch 12:00-1:00 p.m. website: wpcbc.org Join us on Facebook Westminster Presbyterian Church - Bay City Live Stream on YouTube Westminster Presbyterian Church Live Stream</p> | | <p><i>Happy Birthday</i> Peter Vanderwill Royce Stokes Glenn Hignite Ross Brown George Estabrook Nancy Swantek</p> |

*Birthdays listed are for our 75+ Members



UPDATE FROM YOUR PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE (PNC)

Dear Friends:

Last month I outlined the steps we are following to discern who our next pastor will be. I mentioned that by the time the Log came out last month we would be in steps 2 – 4 and we have completed those steps. Our Ministry Information Form (MIF) was approved by the Session and the Commission on Ministry at the Presbytery, and we have started receiving responses to our MIF after its publication. We are currently looking at those Personal Information Forms (PIFs) that we have received and are making some decisions concerning them. That puts us into steps 5, 6, and 7 at this time.

1. Congregation elects a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC);
2. PNC writes the Ministry Information Form (MIF);

3. Session and Commission on Ministry (COM) approve MIF;
4. PNC submits the approved MIF to the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) for publication on their website;
5. The PNC receives and reviews Personal Information Forms (PIFs) from prospective pastors;
6. PNC selects semi-finalists for reference checks and initial conversations;
7. PNC conducts initial conversations;
8. PNC identifies three finalists for on-site or neutral pulpit interviews;
9. PNC selects a final candidate and extends an offer;
10. Terms of Call are negotiated;
11. Session and COM approve Call and Terms;
12. Congregational meeting to elect new pastor and approve terms of call;
13. Sign the call and schedule installation;
14. COM conducts installation of our new pastor.

Please continue to pray for your committee as we continue our work on a weekly meeting basis. We will continue to update you as we are able.

Treasurer's Report

Building Improvement Fund

June Balance: \$23,710.80
 July Income: \$636.00
 July Expense: \$0.00
 July Balance: \$24,346.80

Operating Fund

July Income: \$26,999.19
 July Expense: \$33,938.16

Major Repairs Fund

\$35,639.35

Capital Campaign Fund

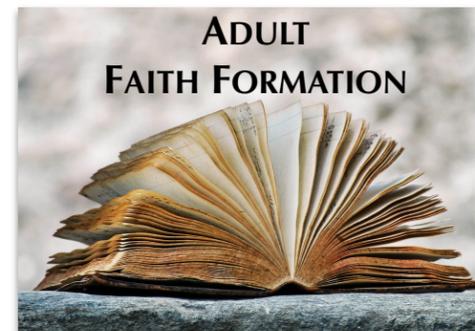
July Income: \$4,302.69
 July Interest Expense: \$1,434.55
 Loan Balance at end of July \$444,677.95

Donate online at www.wpcbc.org



The family of Carol Castrodale expresses their sincere gratitude for the tremendous outpouring of love and support they have received from the WPC family following her death.

The Celebration of Life for Carol Castrodale will take place on Saturday, September 26 at 11:00 a.m. in Westminster's sanctuary. Visitation will be held from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. with the family. Space may be limited, and church COVID-19 guidelines will be observed. Rev. Linda Williams will officiate.



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continue with our Thursday night gatherings, but will change up the content and format by offering a variety of short-term series (approximately one month each). Each series will be self-contained and will be either a four-week Bible study, a current topic of interest that links the news with reflections from scripture, and finally a topical Bible study focused on faith and trust, or God's presence and power, or salvation as described by the Apostle Paul in his various Epistles. Just a few examples. This should keep us busy until Advent!

Stay tuned for greater details as the time draws close so that you can register and we can make materials available to you in advance.

We will meet for the first time on Thursday evening, September 10 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Once we have a better sense of how we are re-grouping for church activities on both Sunday mornings and during the week, we will re-adjust to the possibility of returning to in-person Sunday morning Adult Faith Formation classes.

Please call the office (989-686-1360) to connect with Pastor Linda regarding any questions and to register so that you can receive the materials.

Sunday School, You'll Be Glad you Joined Us

Over the years I have enjoyed our Sunday school classes. We have discussed a wide range of topics including books in the Bible. We have shared in fellowship and in ideas. To me, what we have discussed often becomes even more meaningful to me.

In Ecclesiastes, the "Preacher" advises us not to necessarily "seize the day," not to think it all depended on us. Instead, go calmly about the day doing what's possible, allowing the day to unfold, to open up as it will. Those days when I feel especially pressured, I find this a wise approach. It often allows me to accomplish much more than I thought possible.

Do you sometimes feel angry with God? In the Psalms, that anger is often expressed. In the same psalm, however, there will generally always be toward God, an expression of praise, awe, and thanksgiving.

Recently, our Sunday school class was about prayer. Before class we read material from "The Wired Word." This reading inspired me. But much more than that, our class — the sharing of ideas, the close fellowship... It was wonderful! I so hope you too can join us. Please join us soon!

Anne Remington

Early Morning

By, Karen Schoepf

First light is such a special light. The first glimmer at the horizon heralds the promise of a new day, a fresh start. With each passing minute, the light spreads — sometimes a soft glow, other times a bright beam shoots out at you. The first light has the power to banish all that is dark within, as well as the dark that

surrounds us with the night. This light touches us in different ways — it depends on the surroundings where we experience it.

First light viewed from a window of a city apartment is very different from that seen in farmland, in the mountains, or by the ocean. Yet, it is the same light. Even if the day is cloudy, if morning brings a storm — the light is there.

God is our soul's first light. Not always viewed the same, a different experience for each of us — there no matter how hard it is to see Him.

Open your eyes to first light. Open your heart to God.



Congratulations!



Congratulations to Emily and Aaron Morse on the birth of their daughter, Astrid Kelly Morse, born Wednesday, August 19, 2020. Astrid joins her siblings Everett and Ivy.



Thank you for all the thoughtful cards, kind words, phone calls, and text messages of support through Bill's cancer diagnosis, treatment, and long recovery. Thank you to Ken Wright and Brandi Higgins for stepping in to direct the Chancel and Children's Choirs. Thank you to Wendy Tally for coordinating anything musical that needed to be done. Thank you to Pastor Linda and Pastor Ewen for phone calls and text messages.

We sincerely appreciate all the prayers, which have been answered. God is good! Westminster people are the best!

Bill and Dawn Auger



ADULT BOOK CLUB

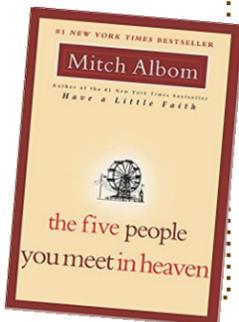
Tuesday, September 22
6:00 - 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

The Adult Book Club meets monthly on the 4th Tuesday of each month from 6:00-7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

On Tuesday, September 22 we will discuss the book "the five people you meet in heaven," by Mitch Albom. "Eddie is a wounded war veteran, an old man who has lived, in his mind, an uninspired life. His job is fixing rides at a seaside amusement park."

On his 83rd birthday, a tragic accident kills him, as he tries to save a little girl from a falling cart. He awakes in the afterlife, where he learns that heaven is not a destination. It's a place where your life is explained to you by five people, some of whom you knew, others who may have been strangers..."

Contact Nikelle for more information and to receive an invitation to the Zoom meeting. Nikelle's email is cedirector@wpcbc.org.



SPIRITUALITY OF AGING



We have not forgotten you! We miss you! We miss getting together around the tables in Fellowship Hall as we shared our brown bag lunches feeding our body, but more importantly

through meaningful conversations, feeding our souls. This pandemic has made that oh so difficult as we have taken all necessary precautions to care for one another and not meet in person. We have

heard from many how much you missed the summer movie series, too.

But we have not forgotten...

Our Spiritual Growth Committee is continuing to explore ideas and possibilities so that we can still find meaningful ways to share our spiritual journeys with each other. We are still investigating several possibilities using materials from the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministry Network. All this to say, this is still in process and we will keep you updated. We are planning to have something in place by the last **Tuesday of September, the 29th**. Stay tuned — we'll keep you posted.

COLLIN HEIDTMAN Statement of Faith

I believe in God. I believe in Jesus Christ, who is his son, I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe that the church is the foundation of my Christian beliefs. My faith comes from the teachings of everyone around me. It comes from my family and the church. I was baptized at Westminster, and have been here my entire life. When I was four I attended my first Vacation Bible School. I enjoyed myself. My favorite part was the games with Chris Elzinga. Mrs. Hanson was my first music teacher.

I participated in the Crop Walk with my mom and grandma, walking to raise money for those in need. When I was younger I thought that the Crop Walk was for fun, but now I know that I was helping the hungry.

There are times that I find it hard to express my faith in traditional ways. Through the years, I have found that I enjoy expressing my faith through music. Mrs. Hanson has played a big role in my musical journey, through both church and school. As my first music teacher she taught me how to read music and count. This gave me a big leg up in my school music program as I already had an understanding of music.

As I got older, I am able to volunteer for VBS. I've been able to model my faith to younger members

of our congregation, just like older members have done for me.

Currently I help with the TV ministry, working the sound board when I can. I've gotten to know other members of the church I might not have come into contact with before, like Aaron Morse and Rick Hebner. They've given me confidence and shown patience as I've learned new things.

When my grandmother was ill, the church played a large role in the life of both me and my mother. It always felt better to see everyone on Sunday mornings. Especially for me, when I was at church, I was doing things that helped take my mind off of the problems that I had at the time. I'll be honest I didn't like to talk about my grandmother's illness, but being at church helped to ease my mind.

These things may all seem unrelated but they stick out to me as important moments in my life. They all helped guide me to be the person that I am today and to help my faith be what it is today. All of these things have helped make me feel at home inside of the church. It has also helped me to realize that I still have a long way to go in my faith journey. My beliefs are still evolving, but I know that this church and its members will continue to provide me with a foundation to build my faith upon.



Congratulations Confirmands!

*You are citizens with the saints
and also members of the household of God,
built upon the foundation of
the apostles and prophets,
with Christ Jesus himself as the
cornerstone.*

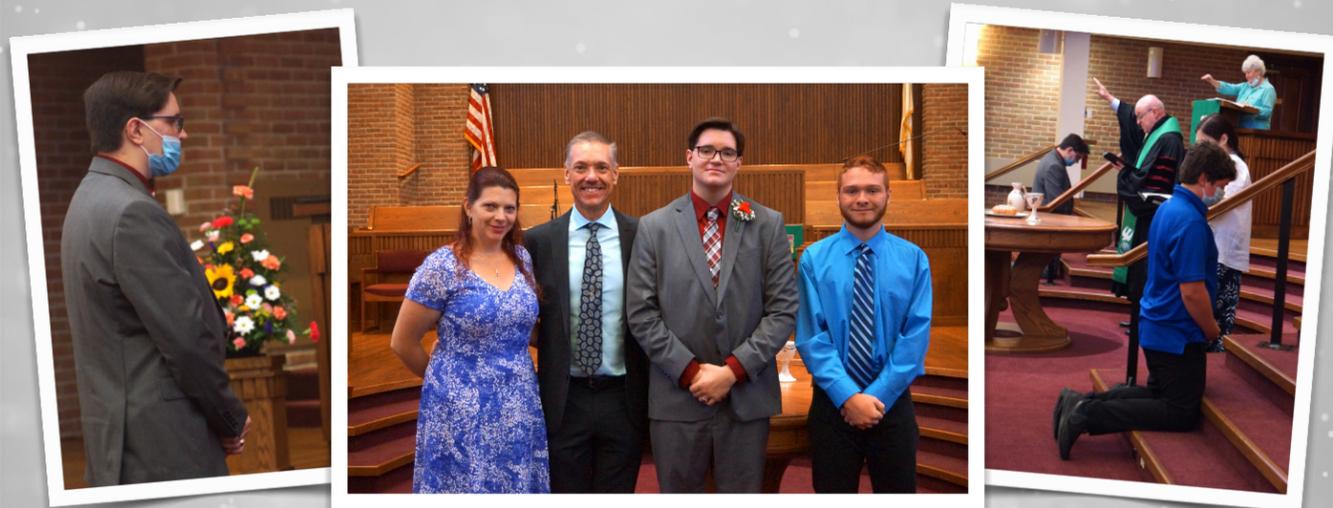


SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 2020

ALAN LAYLE Statement of Faith

Jesus, Faith, and Confirmation. These three words have meant a lot in my life recently. Confirmation has reminded me of my faith and what it means to me. My faith has gotten me through many difficult trials and strengthened my trust in God. I believe my faith can make a big difference in the world, by bringing people closer together. When people come together, great ideas and faith come out.

I have been learning more about my faith each day since I started going to church long ago. The older I get, I listen to the church's teachings in much more detail and appreciate God. My family raising me in this church has reinforced my faith, especially after hearing the church's teachings for so long. I have been going to this church for as long as I can remember. I hope in the future I will always carry out my faith by going to church and remaining faithful, even in times of doubt. Some people may have to remind and help me along the way, in case I stray too far. I know there will always be people watching out for me, inside the church and out. I know I will always trust God, and devote myself to the church. I will always be my Lord and Savior, Christ's, disciple.



Back-to-School Family Fun

RALLY DAY ICE CREAM SOCIAL



In keeping with Westminster's tradition, we will have an Ice Cream Social following worship on **Sunday, September 13,** but will gather outdoors. There will be ice cream bars for all. Please feel free to bring lawn chairs or a blanket to use outside! For the safety of all, we will use masks and physical distancing.

Sunday, September 13, 2020
after worship

Westminster Presbyterian Church Lawn

MASKS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIRED

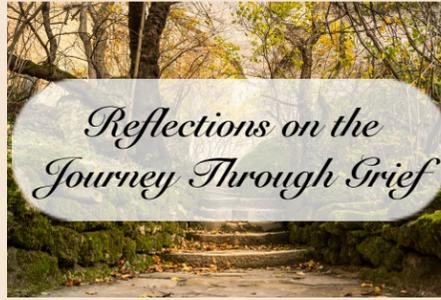
ALL AGES ARE WELCOME

ENJOY FELLOWSHIP WITH YOUR WESTMINSTER FAMILY
AS WE KICK OFF THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER YEAR!



Virtual Vacation Bible School took place Monday, August 17 - Friday, August 21.
Thank you **Leah and Faith Sneller** for your work on the videos!

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.



"I started missing you long before you were gone. I'll keep loving you long after the memories bring you back."

Molly Fumia, author of "Safe Passage"

My friend John's father lived in a nearby nursing home. He suffered from dementia, no longer recognizing his son, although John stayed involved, visiting frequently and speaking often with the nursing staff. When the Covid-19 virus hit, all nursing home visits were put on hold, and it took several weeks before remote visits were eventually offered. When John finally could see his dad through an iPad screen, his father appeared confused by the face he was viewing on another iPad screen. The visit was less than satisfying for John as well.

When his father started to decline, the facility allowed John to visit if he wore a face shield, surgical mask and a gown — but only one visit before death, not repeated visits. John decided not to go. His sister who lives in Arizona decided against traveling to Pennsylvania for several reasons. There was the potential of infection with air travel, her father might not even recognize her, and she would have been forced to stay in a hotel so as

not to endanger other family members.

John's father died alone. Funerals weren't allowed at the time, so a Zoom session with immediate family was set up. Of course there were technical difficulties, but beyond these glitches, there were no opportunities to gather and hug one another. The loss of so many familiar and comforting traditions seemed to deepen John's sense of loss. He felt very alone and heavily burdened.

In the world of grief counseling, this is disenfranchised grief. The term refers to any grief that goes unacknowledged or invalidated by social norms. And we have so many layers of this grief now. We have lost our safe and predictable world. Some of us are coping with grief after a loved one's death, along with job and income loss and the inability to be geographically mobile. We've lost routines, activities, and physical connection. For those grieving a family member who died from Covid-19, we may feel stigma or survivor guilt, the sudden, unexpected turn that led to death and deep sadness if our loved one died alone. If our loved one didn't die from Covid-19, we might experience

a sense that our loss is diminished, that the loss is different because the world is focused on the pandemic instead of individual death. We might question the actual cause of death and not be able to get clear answers.

All of this contributes to our disconnection from mourning. Below we explore ways your experience may be unique to these times and find ways to comfort and connection. To say that these are unusual times is very much an understatement.

Losing the Opportunity to Mourn Together

There are no traditions during this era of coronavirus. Each part of the funeral planning process that would have been done together is another opportunity for misstep and hurt when we are tender and vulnerable.

Not viewing the body is imposed on us rather than chosen by us. "They buried my dad" is mentioned instead of "We buried my dad."

How will we have a service? Should we have a gathering soon or later, and if later, then when?

We have been denied the opportunity to gather for a wake, service, funeral, or a meal after a death. There are no flowers, funeral procession, familiar music and hymns, nor laying eyes on friends from long ago,

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continued from page 4

or relatives who moved away. Casual friends from church, bowling league and co-workers may be unintentionally left out of the mourning process and with them go the memories. We mourn separately and it's not fair.

Because the pandemic dictates physical distancing and masking, our social supports are limited. We are getting so much less than what we need. The pandemic is getting in the way. How do we cope with all this?

Each decision includes an aspect of how we are going to choose to manage the novelty of the situation without the guiding principles of tradition.

Choosing to feel, choosing to just sit with these multiple and confusing feelings rather than acting on them takes courage. Let me say that again. Just feeling emotion takes courage.

Name it, breathe, feel it, breath.

Sitting with the feeling in the moment is a practice of mindfulness. Observe the feeling build, wash over and then recede.

Collectively we are grieving the world that once was and must find new ways of connecting and conversing so that honoring, healing, and reflecting can be possible. Here are some ideas to try:

Find online bereavement support. Look for a group that is hosted by a professional moderator such as a grief counselor, therapist, or social worker. Read the rules on the website for participation and give it a try.

Give self hugs. Put your arms around yourself and squeeze. Give yourself or a pet the physical touch that you would have gotten from others. Science shows that this simple gesture has an impact on the brain similar to a hug from someone else.

Spend time outdoors. Get together with fellow grievers to walk, bike ride, or sit outside at a distance from one another. Find ways to be in the company of others even if it means gathering and socializing in new ways.

Attend an online candlelight vigil. Go to letsreimagine.org, a website hosting monthly virtual candlelight vigils to honor the memory of those who have died from Covid-19.

Read daily mediations. Since grieving is a daily experience, adopt the practice of reading an uplifting message each day. Some sources for these meditations include:

Grieving the Loss of a Loved One by Lorene Hanley Duquin

Safe Passage: Words to Help the Grieving by Molly Fumia

Grief One Day at a Time: 365 Mediations to Help You Heal After Loss by Alan Wolfelt, PhD

Hope and Healing for Transcending Loss by Ashley Davis Bush, LCSW

"Death is Nothing at All" by, Henry Scott Holland

Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away to the next room. I am I and you are you. Whatever we were to each other,

That, we still are.

Call me by my old familiar name. Speak to me in the easy way which you always used. Put no difference into your tone. Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.

Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together. Play, smile, think of me. Pray for me. Let my name be ever the household word that it always was. Let it be spoken without effect. Without the trace of a shadow on it.

Life means all that it ever meant. It is the same that it ever was. There is absolute unbroken continuity. Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?

I am but waiting for you. For an interval. Somewhere. Very near. Just around the corner. All is well.

Reprinted from *Comfort for the Grieving Heart*, St. Luke's Hospice, Bethlehem, PA