

THE SPIRE

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Pittsburgh, PA

My Friends,

Later this month we begin the journey of Lent. It begins with Ash Wednesday, February 26, and ends with Easter Sunday, April 12. The length of the Lenten fast was established in the fourth century as 46 days (40 days, not counting Sundays). Early Christians felt that the importance of Easter called for special preparations. The first mention of a 40-day period of fasting in preparation for Easter is found in the Canons of Nicaea (AD 325). It is thought that the tradition may have grown from the early church practice of baptismal candidates undergoing a 40-day period of fasting in preparation for their baptism at Easter.

You may be wondering how Lent can be 40 days if Ash Wednesday is 46 days before Easter. That is because the Lenten fast does not include Sundays, which are considered feast days (a celebration of the resurrection). So the six Sundays before Easter are omitted from the 40-day observance of fasting. Eventually, the season evolved into a period of spiritual devotion for the whole church.

This season of Lent, our guide for the journey will be the Fourth Commandment: "Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy" (Exodus 19:8; Deuteronomy 5:12).

Abraham Joshua Heschel, the great Jewish scholar, notes that the word *qadosh/holy* is first used in the book of Genesis at the end of the story of creation. This word that speaks of the majesty and mystery of the divine is not used about a place, like a sanctuary or a mountain or an altar. No, the first time that the word *qadosh/holy* is used is when it is applied to time: And God blessed the seventh *day* and made it *holy* (Genesis 2:3). The Christian Sabbath is for us both a special day of the week and a special quality of time accessible daily.

Presbyterian minister and author MaryAnn McKibben Dana wrote a book entitled *Sabbath in the Suburbs* that chronicled her life as she, her husband, and young family experimented for a year trying to observe the Fourth Commandment. She said that their goal was to live in a "sabbathly" manner, keeping the biblical command in spirit if not in letter. After all, how can a mother of a two year old cease working – changing diapers, cleaning spills, and picking up toys – for a whole day?



So it is that we will look at Sabbath during Lent in terms of "Keeping the Sabbath Wholly." Yes, the play on words is intentional, and we will use the sabbathly verbs of Cease, Rest, Embrace, and Feast as signposts along the way. This theme will be followed in sermons leading up to Palm Sunday and will be the focus of our Faith in Life conversations, weekly Bible studies, and a booklet of daily devotions authored by members of Westminster.

I pray our time together this season of Lent will be a time of spiritual growth and fellowship.

Thanks and blessings,
Bruce Lancaster

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Head of Staff*

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for Congregational Care*

REV. JASON FREYER, *Associate Pastor
for the Bridge, Youth & Media*

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KIMBERLY DUNKOVICH, *Associate Accountant*

MANDY THOMAS, *Project Manager*

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ED SUTTER, *Director of Middle School Ministry &
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LAURA ECKLIN, *Coordinator of Children's & Youth
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CENTER (WROC)**

KATHY LONG, *Director*

NURSERY SCHOOL

412-835-2906

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

412-835-9450

Staff email addresses and phone extensions are available on our website, www.westminster-church.org.

Read the *Spire* online at:

www.westminster-church.org

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Per Capita Reminder

Traditional Worship

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📍	Sanctuary

The Bridge Contemporary Worship

📅	Sundays
🕒	9:45 a.m.
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*The Lord's Supper is celebrated the first Sunday of each month.
Gluten-free wafers are available at all services.*



Transfiguration of the Lord

FEB 23

Upcoming Events

14 FEB Chatham Baroque Concert in Galbreath Chapel

16 FEB Blood Drive

23 FEB Transfiguration of the Lord

26 FEB Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday

Worship Service

Wednesday, February 26
7:30 p.m.
Sanctuary





The Attachment of Luther's 95 Theses, Julius Hübner, 1878

Westminster Seminars

Sundays at 9:45 a.m.
Galbreath Chapel

All are welcome!

February Series

Reformation at the Margins

Kenneth Woo, *Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

The Protestant Reformation left an enduring mark on Western Christianity. Figures like Martin Luther, John Calvin, and England's Queen Elizabeth I live on both in faith traditions and in the popular imagination. But what about those less well-remembered? The Reformation affected millions in ways not obvious via the usual stories centered on theological debates and church divisions. Religious pluralism meant violence, exile, and mass migration that disrupted communities across Europe. Some hid their faith. Many died. Others killed.

Join us for a series that will consider how the Reformation was experienced differently not only by Protestants and Catholics, but also women and men, rich and poor, Jews, Muslims, and refugees. Stories of witches, martyrs, heroes, and heretics will shed light on the shape (and cost) of religious difference then and now.



The Rev. Dr. Kenneth J. Woo teaches church history at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, where he also directs the Seminary's Master of Arts in Theological Studies program. A specialist in Reformation history and theology, Ken is the author of Nicodemism and the English Calvin (Brill, 2019). His next book – Calvin, Refugee Theologian – is forthcoming with Baker Academic. A minister of the Reformed Church in America, Ken served as a pastor near Washington, D.C. He lives with his family in Pittsburgh's Highland Park neighborhood.

One Word

Have you ever stopped to consider exactly how much mileage we get out of our four-letter word *love*? This one word can come to mean a whole host of different things. I love Chipotle. I love my wife. I love silly dad jokes. I love the Penguins. I love my kids. I love looking at sunsets. I would argue that each of those is a different kind of love, each a different flavor of this concept to which we dedicate a puny four letters.

And then, speaking from experience, it gets even harder to explain what God is up to with us, particularly to a pair of curious four year olds, when this word is what it comes back to. John would tell us that God is in fact love embodied. We are reminded that God so loved the world that he gave himself up for us, that he gave his life for us. “So God is like Chipotle chips?” my son would ask. Not quite.

It turns out that the Greek writers of the New Testament had a bit more nuanced view of this. They had four different words for love, different flavor notes in each.

The first word for love is *storge* in Greek. This is a love for cute things. In our house, this seems to center around dogs. We love looking at pictures of dogs, playing with our adorable dog in the snow, or even just watching her sleep on the couch. *Storge* is the kind of love that makes you say “Awwwww” in that tone of voice that seems reserved for this level of cuteness.

The second word for love is *eros*, which is a type of physical attraction. It’s that feeling when you see your significant other across the room and find yourself a bit short of breath. Something inside you comes to a screeching halt as you behold the beauty of another person. Now, this word can itself become perverted. When something becomes *erotic*, it has shifted to something dark and menacing and wrong. But still, at its root *eros* is a beautiful and God-given kind of love. Just ask the writer of Song of Solomon.

The third word for love is *phileo*, which is the love associated with friendship. That city with the hockey team whose name I can’t bring myself to mention right now, the one “known” for its brotherly love? That’s what we’re looking at here. This is the kind of love that you share with your deepest friends. It’s the kind of love that enjoys hanging out, going on adventures, and sharing stories with those closest to you in life.

But the word that is used overwhelmingly the most in the Bible to describe love is the Greek word *agape*. This is the kind of love that seems rather foreign to our larger culture, because what *agape* wants to do is insist that the recipient’s needs are more important than the giver’s. *Agape* love is more interested in the welfare of your beloved than it is in your own. *Agape* love is what it looks like when the God of the

universe comes down to us in the flesh, dies the death we so richly deserve, and rises again to give us new life, all because God is overflowing with *agape* love.

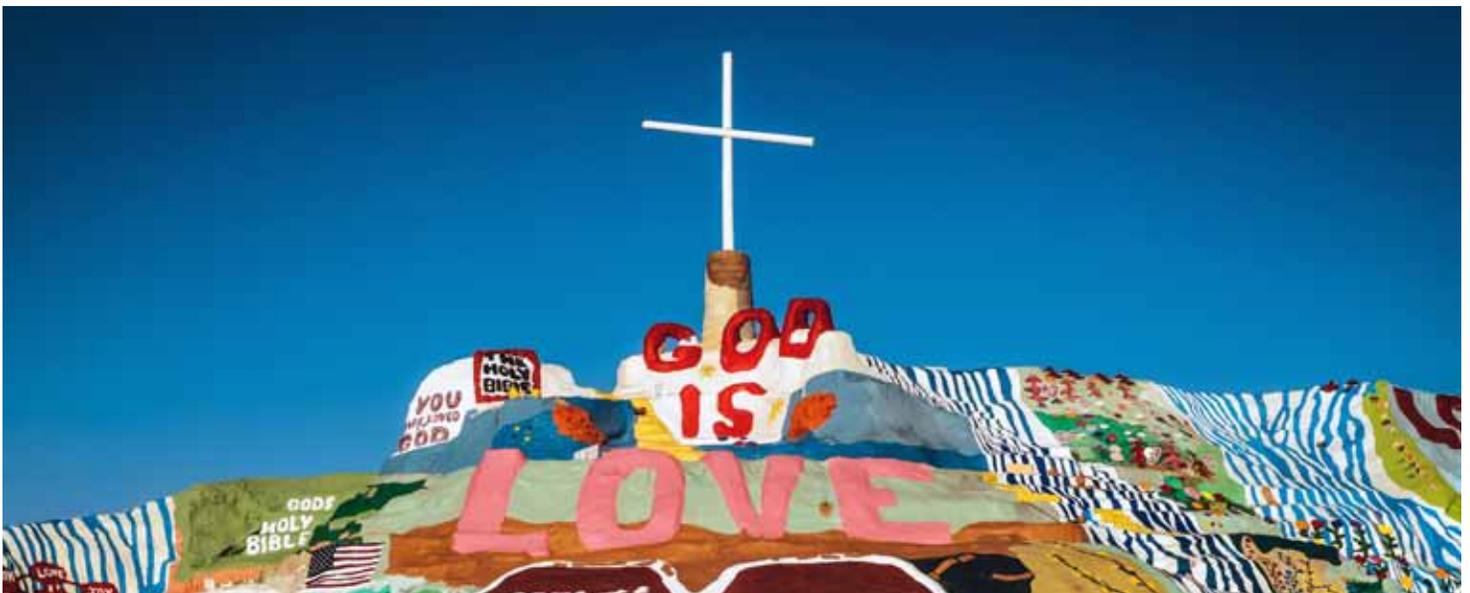
We are called to give the world *agape* love.

Imagine a season in which we were more interested in giving than we were receiving! Imagine a world where people did wonderfully nice things for each other, with absolutely no expectation of reciprocation. Imagine a world where we loved each other without much minding if the other person loved us back. What a beautiful world that would be!

Of course, we are imperfect, so we’re going to screw this up. Constantly in the back of our minds may be a question of what’s in it for me. But still...perhaps we could live just a little bit more into this kind of *agape* love. Perhaps we could invest in our neighbors just a little bit more. Perhaps we could be just a little bit more selfless. Or if not, perhaps we could spend just a little bit more time reflecting on the *agape* love of God, how God gave of himself on the cross for our benefit, and not God’s own.

It is indeed a season of love! Let’s live into it more and more each day!

– Jason Freyer



BETWEEN HERE AND THERE

February is here, the unofficial month of love. Do you ever wonder if we're missing something when it comes to how we talk about and express love in this season? Think of the stereotypes: flowers, chocolates, jewelry, candlelight dinners. All these things are totally fine on their own. Truthfully, many of us really enjoy these things, and according to *The 5 Love Languages* by Gary Chapman, giving and receiving gifts is a very real way to experience and show love. I'm definitely not writing this to bash any of those things. My hope is that we'd all take a few moments to do a quick inventory of how we show love to those around us.

All of us should do this kind of check from time to time, especially if some of the stereotypes leave you feeling unsatisfied. There are, I'm sure, hundreds of ways to go about this process, but let's start with three simple questions.

First: What is it about the relationship that connects you? I don't mean answers like "He's my husband" or "She's my daughter." What is it that *really* connects you? What draws you to that person? This can be anything from relational experiences that you've shared together or personality traits and quirks that you've come to know and love. There are tons of ways to answer this question. Much of the time I find that the people I am most connected with have traits that I admire. It's helpful for me to remember those things.

Second: What do you want to express? I know, I know. You want to say "I love you." At least that's what they printed on the card, right? Again, what do you *really* want to say? Perhaps it's an apology. Maybe a recommitment. Maybe you never said the thing

that you've been meaning to say for so long. Remember, it's not always about what you *say*. What you want to express to that person may be a shift in your behaviors. It may be shuffling your schedule. It may mean starting new habits or moving away from old ones. You've known it since elementary school: actions speak louder than words.

Third: What would that person connect with? What's going to be meaningful for the recipient? I'm sure we've all been on the receiving end of a gift that just didn't have the impact that the giver had hoped for – sometimes that's because this question didn't get answered. Some people love getting gifts, some prefer to spend time together, others could use a little help or support getting something done. Remember, you know this person. You love this person. What is it that would be truly meaningful to them?

Sure, this all takes a little more work than some of the stereotypes (and let me be clear: some people love flowers and chocolates and cards), but this process feels a whole lot more meaningful than grabbing something quick on the way home. The other beautiful piece of this process is that it works for just about anyone: friends, neighbors, bosses, employees, whoever. Love ought to be a centerpiece of all that we do as disciples of Jesus. This season is a great time to make that shift with everyone that we can!

How do you like to give and receive love? I'd love to hear about it. Give me a buzz when you have some time.

– Ed Sutter



FROM A DAUGHTER'S HEART

February is a month of love. When we celebrate Valentine's Day, we share gifts of love with cards, candy, flowers, and other tokens of affection. We are reminded of God's love and his commandment: "This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

What does it truly mean to love one another as I have loved you? A very meaningful and memorable hymn from my childhood that comes to my mind is "I have loved you with an everlasting love, I have called you and you are mine." How do we do this? What does it mean to love one another as Jesus loves us?

Being a follower of Jesus Christ, loving one another or loving our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ means demonstrating love the same way Jesus would. Jesus loves unconditionally, sacrificially, and eternally. He wants us to grow in spirit and love others. To love one another is to love as Jesus loves us. The Holy Spirit places the love of God in our hearts and persuades and empowers us to move beyond ourselves. Our superficial love then becomes a sincere, heartfelt love.

One of my favorite scriptures about love is...

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

— 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

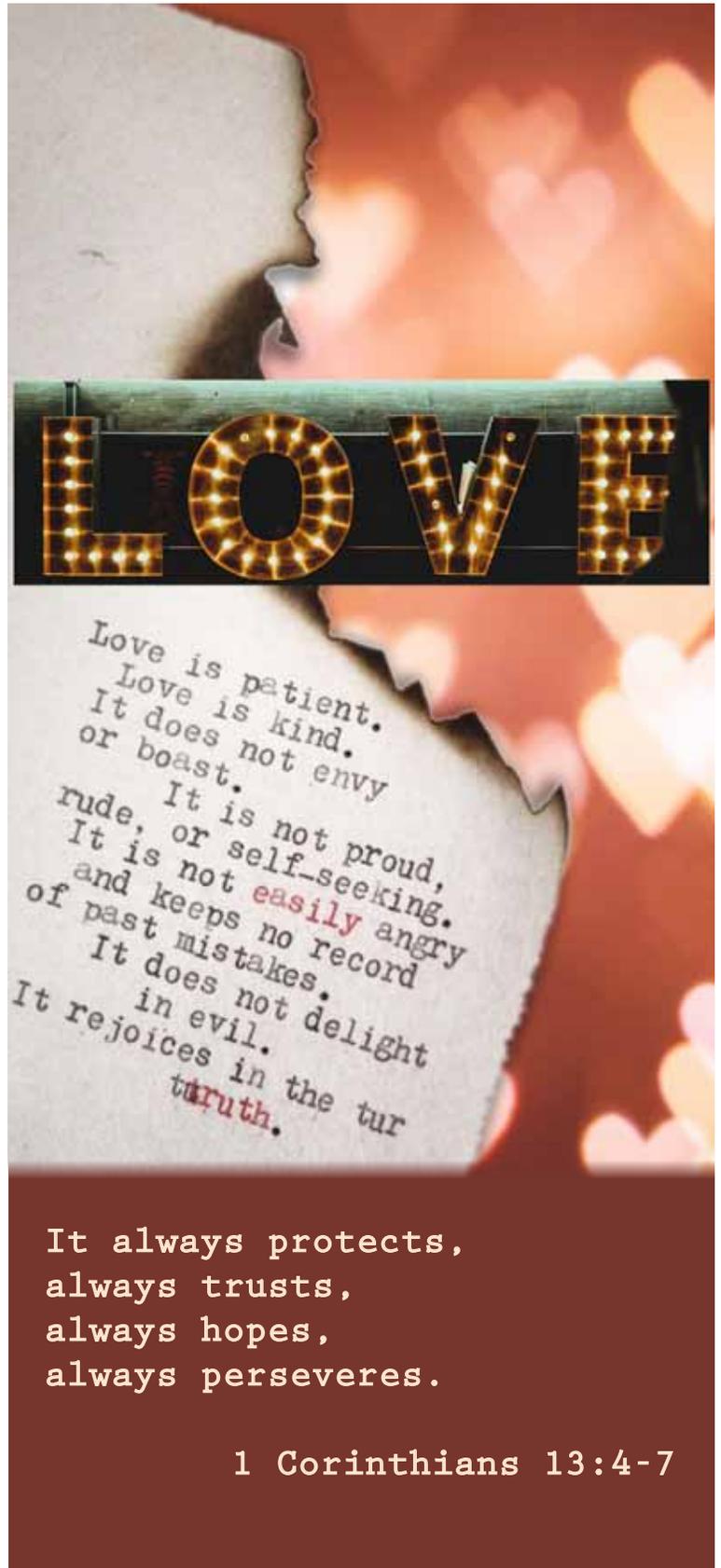
This scripture gives a beautiful description of what Jesus' love is like. Just as parents, we love our children deeply and unconditionally. God has given us this compassionate love. We pass this love along to our children and provide the example of loving others the way Jesus loves us.

God's love for us is unfathomable. It surpasses a parent's love for a child. With God's love, you will experience the joy of receiving love from our heavenly Father, and of giving his love to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Just as the scripture says, "And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

I pray for each of you a heart full of love that every day you must give some away to those whose paths you cross.

With God's love,

Natalie Brown



**It always protects,
always trusts,
always hopes,
always perseveres.**

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Bible Basics

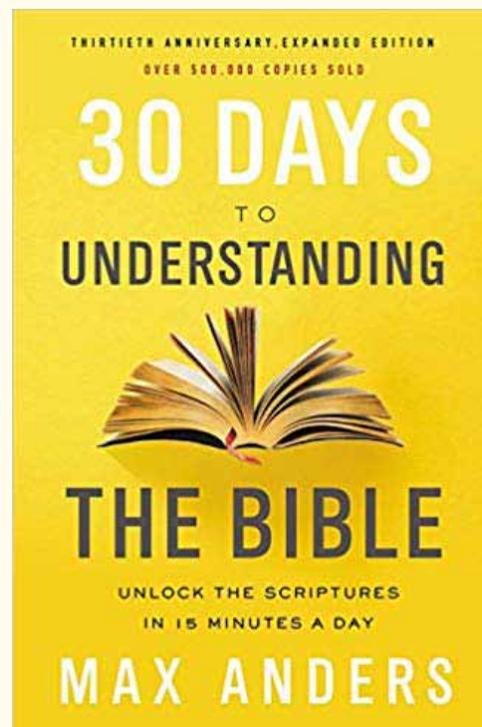
Monday mornings

February 3, 10, 17, 24; March 2, 9

10:00 – 11:15 a.m.

Room 231

Using the book *30 Days to Understanding the Bible*, Louise Rogers will give an overview of the Bible moving from Old to New Testament. If you are new to the Bible or would like to learn more, this is the class for you. In a simple format you'll be introduced to Bible characters, places, and events in a framework so you can "walk your way through" the entire word of God. Registration is required. Contact Kathy Long or wroc. westminster-church.org.



Westminster Book Group

Wednesday, February 26

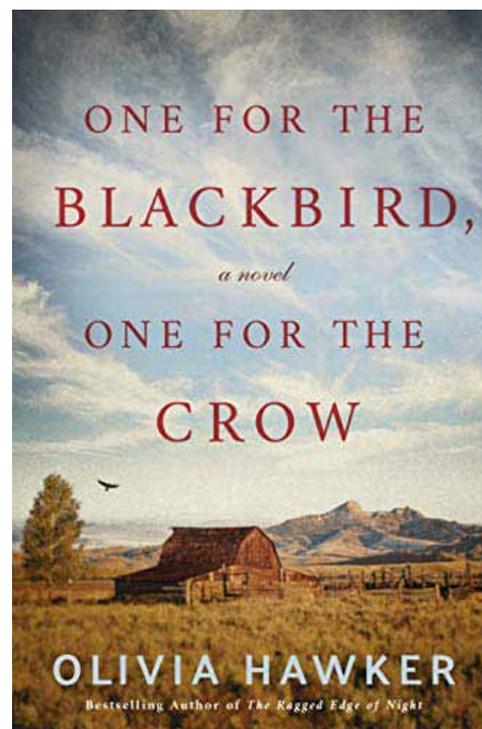
Noon – 1:15 p.m.

Yahweh Café

You are invited to bring a brown bag lunch and join us for the next meeting of the Westminster Book Group, when we will discuss *One for the Blackbird*, *One for the Crow* by Olivia Hawker.

One for the Blackbird, *One for the Crow* is a lyrically written story of 1870s Wyoming and the hardships of two tragically connected families. This is a story of healing and hope. Olivia Hawker's beautiful writing is a story to be savored!

– Goodreads



Silence for our lives

P
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Silence

*“Plunge into the ocean of God
Through stillness in the spirit
And silence within the soul.”*

— Nan Merrill

*“To learn how to wait, how to be silent, how
to befriend the dark... Thus do we prepare to
be creative. There is a waiting, a silence and
a darkness in all birthing. Heart’s winter is
already a filling womb.”*

— Daniel J. O’Leary

The WROC Has Added New Classes!

Saturday Zumba

The WROC is grooving on Saturdays to the beat of Latin inspired music and feels more like a dance party than a workout, which is exactly what makes Zumba so popular. Zumba dancers move fast and have fun while getting exercise and burning calories. Using upbeat Latin music together with cardiovascular exercise, Zumba is aerobic dancing that is lots of fun and easy to learn.

Saturdays: 9:45 – 10:45 a.m.
Pay per class: \$7

Jocelyn Blystone is a new addition to the WROC team of fitness instructors. She has been a licensed Zumba Instructor since 2012 and previously led classes at LA Fitness Center. Her energy, enthusiasm, and easy-to-follow routines make her classes fun!



Zumba continues to be offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays with Debbie Colditz.

Tuesdays and Thursdays: 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.
Pay per class: \$7

Debbie Colditz has been a licensed Zumba instructor since April 2007 and teaching Zumba at the WROC since 2007. Debbie studied dance for 17 years and fitness for more than 20 years. Her passion and care for her students keeps people coming back.



Barre Fitness

(55+ friendly)

This class fuses Pilates, yoga, and core fitness into a total body workout. Barre fitness is low-impact, therefore protecting your joints. But don't be fooled since it is a total body workout. The use of isometric movements will tone your abs, thighs, arms, and burn fat.

Wednesdays through February 26
8:00 – 8:45 a.m.
Silver Sneakers membership accepted
Non-Silver Sneakers members: \$5/class

Visit the WROC website at wroc.westminster-church.org for a complete listing of WROC programs and registration or contact Kathy Long at 412-835-6630.

Boom Muscle

(55+ friendly)

Muscle incorporates athletic-based exercises that improve upper body conditioning. You'll move through several "blocks," which are groups of exercises that focus on different muscle groups. The focus of this class is on toning muscles and building overall strength.

Tuesdays through February 25
1:15 – 2:00 p.m.
Silver Sneakers membership accepted
Non-Silver Sneakers members: \$5/class

EnerChi

(55+ friendly)

Easy to learn, modified Tai Chi

EnerChi is comprised of easy-to-learn, modified Tai Chi forms aimed at improving well-being. Low-impact movements are practiced in a slow, flowing sequence to progress strength, balance, and focus. Benefits include increased muscular endurance, improved balance recovery, and a calm mind. Chair support is offered to facilitate standing stability and seated exercise options.

Mondays and Fridays: 8:00 – 8:45 a.m.
Silver Sneakers membership accepted
Non-Silver Sneakers members: \$5/class

Renea Bishop is also a new addition to the WROC team of fitness instructors. She holds ACE Group Fitness Certification, Silver Sneakers Certifications, and has 15 years of fitness experience. Renea loves what she does and it shows. You can't miss the energy and passion she shows for all of her students.



Pickleball

(Additional sessions added)

Pickleball is a racket game for all ages and abilities. All players must register and be at least 18 years old. Designed as a fun, social, and easy-to-learn activity, Pickleball combines the elements of tennis, badminton, and ping pong, using paddles, a small wiffle ball, a net, and a court. Join the current roster of players for a fun and social evening. This is a non-competitive evening with lots of laughter. Never played before? We'll teach you. Equipment provided.

Fridays
through May 29
8:00 – 10:00 p.m.
Cost: \$20

Sundays
through May 31
6:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Cost: \$3 drop-in fee

Chatham Baroque at Westminster

The Art of the Trio

Friday, February 14

7:30 p.m.

Galbreath Chapel

Chatham Baroque's annual concert in celebration of the collective virtuosity, talent, and teamwork of artistic directors Andrew Fouts, Patricia Halverson, and Scott Pauley as they continue their boundless exploration of intimate chamber music from the Baroque and beyond. Highlights include *stylus fantasticus* sonatas of Dietrich Buxtehude and Johann Heinrich Schmelzer, elegant dance music, and solo music featuring the Baroque violin, viola da gamba, and Baroque lute.

Tickets, with discounts for seniors and students, are available online and at the door. For more information and ticket prices, visit www.chathambaroque.org or call 412-687-1788. Ticket prices are \$5 more at the door.

"The stylus fantasticus...is the most free and unrestrained method of composing. It is bound by nothing, neither by words nor by harmonic subject. It was instituted to display genius and to teach the hidden design of harmony, and the ingenious composition of harmonic sequences and fugues."

– Athanasius Kircher (1650)



Caring Notes

A very special happy birthday to Jackson Beck who turns four on February 29, 2020!

Jackson is a sweet child in our congregation who contracted a virus, Acute Flaccid Myelitis (AFM). Although the virus attacked his nervous system, Jackson is growing as a talkative, fun-loving kid! Over the past year he has gotten taller and smarter!

Jackson goes to school/daycare at Child's Way where he gets to socialize with other kids. Some highlights of Jackson's past year include the Upper St. Clair baseball team "Jackson Beck Night," which was awesome and very well done. In May, Jackson was the Grand Marshall for Upper St. Clair's Community Day.

The highlight of the summer was Jackson going to Children's Hospital's vent camp, Camp Inspire. There he got to do arts and crafts, swim, drive his power chair, go ziplining, perform "Baby Shark" in a talent show, and make many new, wonderful friends! Over Christmas Jackson's family traveled to Chicago to visit with family.

Jackson had surgery last summer at the Shriners Hospital in Philly. The hope is to allow Jackson to breath on his own one day. Jackson – we hope you have a happy birthday with your family and friends.



We continue to pray with and for Jackson and his family, Nicole, Bobby, and sister Charlotte.

We journey with you.

Living in hope,

Louise





Blood Drive

**Sunday, February 16
8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Fellowship Hall**

Westminster Deacons sponsor three blood drives a year in Fellowship Hall – in September, February, and May. Plan to donate on February 16. Reservations are strongly encouraged, but walk-ins are welcome too.

In many ways Pittsburgh provides more blood and blood products than people realize. We have major transplant centers and major trauma centers. Many people come to our city from around the world for special treatments, surgeries, and life-saving procedures. The gift of blood is a truly special one.

In order to donate, you must

- Be 18 years or older (17 with parental consent)
- Weigh at least 110 lbs.
- Not have donated within the last 56 days
- Be in good health

Medications such as insulin, aspirin, and high blood pressure treatments do not prevent you from donation. However, specific restrictions apply to donors who have traveled abroad, are on certain medications, or have a fresh piercing or tattoo.

Donors can register online at www.vitalant.org – use sponsor code G0010171 – or sign up at church on Sundays, February 2 and 9. For medical questions or to make a reservation by phone, call Vitalant at 888-939-9479.

Donors, please remember to eat a good breakfast and drink plenty of non-caffeinated beverages. Snacks and goodies will be available for all donors.

The Westminster Deacons thank you for supporting this worthy mission.

Deaths

Miles Ford

January 9



Inquirers' Gathering

Believing and Belonging Go Together!

Saturday, February 15

9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Memorial Parlor

In writing about the early church, the author of Acts 2:46-47 tells us, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer....They continued to meet together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all people. And the Lord added to their number daily."

These are the reasons we gather together at Westminster Presbyterian Church: to worship God, to hear and study God's Word, to have fellowship with one another, to share in the Lord's Supper and pray together, and to serve God in mission. And, yes, God continues to add to our numbers.

If you know of someone who is interested in membership, invite them to consider an Inquirers' Class. This is a time of sharing and teaching as we explore what it means to be a faithful follower of Christ in the Presbyterian tradition. Classes take place on Saturday mornings from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. in Memorial Parlor, and the next one will be February 15. Please contact Peg Kinsey for reservations.

Church Closing Policy

In the event of severe weather, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Westminster Nursery School and Kindergarten (WNSK), and Westminster Recreation & Outreach Center (WROC) will follow the schedule of the Upper St. Clair School District.

- When the school district is closed, all activities, classes, and meetings scheduled for that day are canceled.
- In cases of delays, all meetings, activities, and classes will take place at their scheduled time, unless otherwise determined by the facilitator or instructor. Westminster Nursery School will operate on its modified schedule.

Westminster Child Development Center will make its own determination on closings, cancellations, and delays.

Closing information is broadcast on television (KDKA, WTAE, and WPXI), radio (KDKA-AM 1020), and the internet (www.westminster-church.org, wroc.westminster-church.org, pittsburgh.cbslocal.com, www.wtae.com, and www.wpxi.com).

Officers' Retreat 2020

Our theme for our Officers' Retreat was "Westminster Presbyterian Church: Maintenance or Mission?" We spent Friday evening, January 10, and Saturday morning, January 11, discussing the answer.

We first looked at our sign on Washington Road: Westminster Presbyterian Church – A Community of Faith Since 1947. What does that sign mean to the thousands of people who drive by each day and to those of us who are members? As we compared that sign to all the others along Washington Road, exactly what business are we in? We had words like "welcoming, inclusive, mission, witnesses, service" and many others but all summed up in the one word, LOVE.

The rest of our time was involved in the "how" of making that happen: of maintaining a community of faith whose mission is love.

In one of our discussions we were directed to a study done of Presbyterian churches that are growing. It was titled "Beyond the Ordinary" and offered six strengths of growing churches:

1. Growing churches welcome new people.
2. Growing churches encourage participation.
3. Growing churches care for children and youth.
4. Growing churches offer meaningful worship experiences.
5. Growing churches help people grow spiritually.
6. Growing churches commit to a positive future.



Elders, January 2020



Deacons, January 2020

We concluded by sharing our hopes and prayers for the next year that spoke of outreach and generosity, faith and forward-looking, supportive and committed. We ask the congregation to please keep our elders and deacons in your prayers.

– Bruce Lancaster

Per Capita Reminder

Please remember to forward your 2020 per capita apportionment to the church finance office. **The amount set by Pittsburgh Presbytery for 2020 is \$34.79 per member.** Each year Westminster must send the amount set for the year to the presbytery for each active member of our church. For those members who do not send in their per capita apportionment, we must make up the difference from our operating budget. For those of you receiving offering envelopes, there is an envelope inside each box for the per capita apportionment. For those of you who have elected not to receive offering envelopes, please note "2020 Per Capita" on the memo line of your check. If you have any questions regarding this apportionment, please contact Cindy Bingham, church financial manager at 412-835-6630x201. **Thank you.**



**WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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“Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.”

1 John 4:11-12

