



THE SPARE

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Pittsburgh, PA

All Things New

In Revelation 21, near the end of the Bible, the one on the throne of heaven declares, "Behold, I make all things new!" And he adds, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true."

You can count on this, says the Maker of heaven and earth. This is the way things are, and the way they will be. You should believe it, because it's the truth. People believe all sorts of things that are not true, out of ignorance or deception or some preferred illusion. But this word from heaven is the truth. God says so. And God is the source of all that is true.

Moreover, because God's word is true, it's worthy of your trust. Human beings often put their trust in people or things that let them down when they turn out to be untrustworthy. But God is not like that. Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." To follow him is to walk the road that not only leads to abundant life but is that life itself. Christian devotion consists in trusting Christ, and therefore living in faith, hope, and love.

What does the one on the throne mean by claiming to make "all things new"? That might strike some as a scary proposition. If all is going well for them, novelty may be the last thing some people want. Human beings are proverbially frightened by change, and many resist it mightily.

But the biblical vision is that the good things in life are constantly renewed, and the bad things are ultimately redeemed. So the Old Testament book of



Lamentations says, "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning." And Paul writes to the Corinthians, "Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day."

The voice from the throne in the Revelation of John promises "... the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."

The bad things that frighten people and burden them with sorrow will be overcome

and cast away; they will no longer threaten anyone in heaven. If they are remembered at all, it will be only as an occasion for thanksgiving to God, "who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy," as the psalmist says.

Little signs of renewal are scattered throughout our lives: night gives way to dawn, a new year begins, a child is born. These are promissory notes of good things to come, and they come from God, whose words are always trustworthy and true.

PASTORS

DR. JIM GILCHRIST, *Senior Pastor, Head of Staff*
 REV. LOUISE ROGERS, *Associate Pastor*
for Congregational Care
 REV. JASON FREYER, *Associate Pastor*
for the Bridge, Youth & Media

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PASTORS

PEG KINSEY

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CINDY BINGHAM, *Interim Business Administrator*
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JOAN WATSON

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Family Ministry
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Family Ministry
 ED SUTTER, *Director of Middle School Ministry &*
Family Counseling
 CASSANDRA MILLIS, *Assistant Director of Youth &*
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Christian Education & Youth Ministry
 LAURA ECKLIN, *Youth Ministry Intern*

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 JIM BURNS, *Organist*
 AMY SANDERS, *Administrative Assistant*

OUTREACH MINISTRY

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PROPERTY

CHARLEY RICHARDSON, *Property Manager*

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY

JAN BAUMANN, *Volunteer Coordinator*
 CARRIE KUSHNER, *Kitchen Manager*

WESTMINSTER RECREATION & OUTREACH 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

The Spire is published monthly by the church staff from September through June. Contributions can be made by emailing a Word document to *Spire* editor Sara Kyle at sara@ruhlekyle.org. The deadline for submitting an article is the fifth day of every month for the following month's issue. Please include the author's name, telephone number, email address, and a title. All articles are subject to editing.

3 Worship

Sunday Worship Services
 Upcoming Events

4 Education

Westminster Seminars
 Diary of a Lunatic: Between
 Between Here and There
 A Glimpse of My World

8 Community Outreach

Westminster Recreation & Outreach Center
 Music & Arts: Chatham Baroque at Westminster
 February Concerts at Westminster

10 Mission

Presbyterians and Mission

11 Caring Community

Embracing the Gift of Life and Living Healthfully
 Caring Notes
 Westminster Book Club
 Baptism of the Lord
 Baptisms

15 Other

What Is Per Capita?
 Session Update
 Deaths

**Traditional
Worship**

📅	Sundays
🕒	8:30 & 11:00 a.m.
📍	Sanctuary

**The Bridge
Contemporary Worship**

📅	Sundays
🕒	9:45 a.m.
📍	WROC

*The Lord's Supper is celebrated the first Sunday of each month.
Gluten-free wafers are available at all services.*



Epiphany
God Revealed in the World

We celebrate Epiphany on January 6, which falls on Sunday this year. We remember the exotic magi traveling from the East, following a bright star, to worship the newborn Christ. But what does this vivid imagery mean? The word *epiphany* means the manifestation or appearance of a divine being, and that is what happened when the wise men visited the Christ child. God, through the light of the guiding star, revealed himself to all the world: God made flesh in Christ Jesus, the light of the world. On earth, Christ spread the good news near and far, offering God's grace to all people. As Christians, we rely on God's holy light to fill our lives and shine through us day after day. It sustains us.

Upcoming Events

4
JAN Chatham Baroque at Westminster

6
JAN Epiphany

13
JAN Baptism of the Lord
Ordination and Installation of Officers

27
JAN Congregational Meeting

Sundays at 9:45 a.m.
Galbreath Chapel

January Series

Making Sense of the Book of Revelation

James E. Davison

Revelation! For many, the very name of this last book in the New Testament conjures up weird images of violence and bizarre predictions about historical events. For others, it is an exciting prophecy of events we see happening before our very eyes. In this series, we will seek to unlock John's purpose in writing and make sense of the images and events he portrays. Our aim will be to grasp how the central message of this book, written to Christians in the *first* century, is extremely valuable for us in the *twenty-first* century!

January 6 Revelation and Its (Mis)Interpreters

January 13 John, His First Readers, and His Message

January 20 Unmasking Fake Truth and Power

January 27 So...What Does Revelation Mean for Us?



Last Judgement by Michelangelo



Rev. Dr. James E. Davison (Jim) served for 17 years here at Westminster Presbyterian Church as Minister of Education. In 2001, he moved to Pittsburgh Theological Seminary as Director of Continuing Education, where he also taught New Testament Greek, until he retired in 2013. Earlier, Jim taught religion and philosophy at Sterling College in Kansas. He is a graduate of Westminster College, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, the Free University of Amsterdam, and the University of Iowa. Jim has written a number of books and articles for pastors and laypersons, including The Year of the Bible, which he developed here at Westminster and which has now been used by many congregations in our denomination and beyond. Jim says that he and his wife, Reeny, have three sons and six of "the greatest grandchildren in the world – of course!"



Between

Greetings and salutations!

The Christmas season has come to a close. Presents have been opened, families have been visited, parties have been enjoyed. The new year is upon us, and we're likely beginning to shudder as we imagine getting back into a regular work routine. In truth, this can be a difficult season of the year for me. When Christmas is here, or at least on its way, the snow on the ground is magical. Now it's annoying. When Christmas is here, I'm okay with a cluttered house because it is usually the sign of a good time. Now I have to clean. We've been on a wild ride together, having gone from Halloween to Thanksgiving to Christmas to New Year's. And now no big holiday is on the horizon for us.

We are, for all intents and purposes, in-between.

Church tradition came up with a really bizarre name for this season of life. We call it "Ordinary Time," hardly a name of celebration. It's the season between Christmas and Lent, when we start preparing our way toward the empty tomb at Easter. In Lent we will have all kinds of

preparation. Until then, we just have to sit around and...wait.

After reflecting on this, I realize how much we live in-between. All the adolescents I work with live between childhood and adulthood, trying to make sense of both worlds in the transition. Some of us shift between the good parts of our lives and the darker desires we carry around with us, neither fully one nor the other at any given time. Others are between the future we've been waiting for – perhaps graduation day or a new job or retirement – and the present reality. We live so very much of our lives in-between.

To be sure, some people feel tremendous anxiety when they find themselves in the in-between. Answers aren't readily available. Motion is not abundantly clear. We can feel stuck, and stuck can bother us.

When I was growing up, our youth group was called "The Eddy." I didn't have any clue what that meant when I first started going to youth group. I thought maybe some guy named Ed had given a whole bunch of money to the program or something. But I learned later that "eddy" is a term from whitewater kayaking. The eddy is the space just behind a huge rock,

where the water has a tendency to pool and be much calmer than the surrounding rapids. Kayakers who are having a tough day, getting tired, can sneak into the calm waters of an eddy and catch their breath and take a rest.

How precious is it, then, that the church actually *celebrates* the space in-between? How precious is it that we announce the in-between times as holy ground, almost demanding that even in the in-between times we take off our shoes for reverence? Perhaps we could take this space in the in-between to celebrate the successes of our past while we continue to long for the advancement of our future. Maybe we could use the in-between season to rest in the eddy of God's promises to us, before we dive back out into the rapids of daily life. Of course, Westminster has a blog (www.westminster-church.org/blog) where we will spend this month looking at what it means to be in-between, and how we can use those seasons to our advantage.

So, from all of us to all of you, happy Ordinary Time, everyone! Enjoy the in-between!

– Jason Freyer

BETWEEN HERE & THERE

My high school physics teacher used to make fun of the common phrase “Of course, it was in the last place I looked!” He would always reply with “Everything’s in the last place you look...who keeps looking after they’ve found what they were looking for!”

I’ve been thinking a lot recently about what it means to “seek God.” It’s a phrase that you’ve perhaps heard before, maybe hundreds of times. I wonder if we’ve taken the logic of “stop looking once you’ve found something” to our relationship with God. Where is *your* relationship with God right now? Did you leave it in a drawer somewhere? Is it stored away, sealed up tight and tucked in the attic waiting for the right season to come around? Or do you carry it with you everywhere you go? Do you still seek your relationship with God, or have you lost track of it?

The words “to seek” imply that we may not find. We may not fully grasp. We may only catch glimpses. The Hebrew word *darash* used in the Old Testament means more than just “to seek”; it also means “to require.” Seeking God means constantly looking, not settling on the belief that we once had success in the search. But it also means admitting that *we need* God. When we seek God, we look for the relationship that makes life possible.

This is precisely what can make seeking God so very frustrating. Frustration comes quickly when you can’t find something that you need. Have you ever needed your car keys on the way out the door? Exactly.

What does all of this mean for us? Well, here’s one take on the matter: If you’re not experiencing some frustration or dissatisfaction in your efforts to seek after God, perhaps you’re not actually seeking God. Perhaps you’ve settled for your own handmade idols, or you’ve chosen to gloss over the rough spots in your life and connection to our Creator. We were made to be in perfect relationship with God, and until we have experienced this in full, we will *all* experience frustration. We will all experience pain. We will all need to seek.

You and I require God; so we must seek him. We seek him when he seems far away. We seek him when he feels close. We seek him because apart from him we have nothing. We need to admit that truth to ourselves and to others. Whisper it out loud to yourself right now. “I seek God because I need him.” Now tell it to God: “I seek you because I need you.” No matter whether God was in the first place you looked or the last place, never give up. The frustration is a sign that you’ve allowed yourself to surrender to the truth that you simply need God.

Keep seeking, my friends. As always, I’d love to hear about your search. When have you felt close to God, or when has God felt hidden? I’d love to share in your story.

– Ed Sutter



GLIMPSE OF MY WORLD

Many of you know that I am a big fan of the beach. I love to walk along the edge of the water, enjoying the sights and sounds, thinking, dreaming. In my many hours spent walking along various beaches, I have collected quite a few seashells.

When my kids were small, I used to think that their plan was to empty the beach of every shell, as they filled buckets with these treasures to bring home. (In fact, it wasn't unusual for me to sneak back to the beach during naptime to return several pails full of shells.)

As they grew, and learned to be more particular, I found that we were collecting only the most perfect shells we could find. A chip or crack would be cause enough to drop a given shell back onto the sand. Disappointment reigned when a perfect shell turned out to still have a shellfish resident; exposure to national park ranger talks had established the rule that "live" shells must always be returned to the water. Only empty perfect shells could be collected. Each perfect shell would be carried carefully home, cleaned, and then displayed.

But I have recently noticed a change in the kinds of shells that catch my eye. More and more I find myself picking up shells that are broken. And not just chipped or cracked. Instead, it's the shells that really have been battered in the waves. Often there may be only a fragment of the original shell left. Yet somehow it seems to me that this broken shell lets me see and enjoy the colors that may be hidden inside. Or the brokenness may actually emphasize the shape or design, in ways that I might not notice in the whole shell.

On a recent walk I was pondering this change, wondering a bit why I am finding myself drawn to these less-than-perfect shells. I'm really not at all certain why my preference and attention has changed. But here's a thought: what if, just maybe, my new appreciation for broken and battered shells is a reflection of what God sees in us?

I've always thought that God perhaps had a way of looking past our broken edges, less-than-perfect behavior, bad choices and messy lives. As if he could choose to overlook all that stuff, and see the perfect, shining, loving people he meant us to be. A little like the way we look past the torn jeans, dirty hands, and smudged faces, and still see the children we love underneath all the mess. In other words, "Broken, but still beautiful."

But what if, in some way, God loves us more, not in spite of our brokenness, *but because of it*? What if, a bit like my seashells, we are in some strange way actually more beautiful, able to be more loving, more open to God and to others, maybe even more ourselves, because we are broken? What if, in God's eyes, we are instead "beautiful, *because* we are broken"? And, if God can see beauty in our brokenness, maybe we can learn to see beauty in the brokenness in ourselves and in those around us.

– Robin Pyles



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First Place 4 Health

A Christ-Centered Weight Loss and Healthy Living Program

The First Place 4 Health program has been offered at Westminster Presbyterian Church since 2010. The program is for anyone, regardless of current level of weight, fitness, or spirituality.

What's unique about First Place 4 Health?

- Christ-centered priorities: Bible study, prayer, and scripture memory
- Choices for health: addressing the whole person – emotions, mind, body, and spirit
- Community: support and accountability through small groups

First Place 4 Health includes a series of Bible studies that address many issues of everyday life and provide opportunities for growth in Christ. Members complete a weekly Bible study which – combined with prayer and scripture reading – helps to impart God's strength, empowering members to overcome temptation and make long-lasting lifestyle changes.

Why Choose First Place 4 Health?

A wide variety of people become members of First Place 4 Health, from those who struggle with losing five to ten pounds to those who battle obesity or are tired of yo-yo dieting. Some may join to increase their knowledge about nutrition, to get help with implementing a consistent exercise plan, or to learn how to develop a healthy lifestyle for their family. Whatever their reasons, they soon discover that First Place 4 Health is a biblically based, medically trustworthy wellness program. When participants reach their weight-loss goals in First Place 4 Health, they experience tremendous joy in that accomplishment. Success, however, is not found simply in achieving goals but in the process of change itself, aided by God.



Candy Kottyan – My First Place 4 Health Journey

Candy Kottyan, Westminster Church member and First Place 4 Health participant, has agreed to share her journey to inspire and encourage others to begin their own journey:

I started in First Place for Health in September of 2017. I joined mainly because I wanted to lose some weight and I certainly wasn't losing it on my own. I wasn't really sure what a Bible study could do for me to help me lose weight, but I figured that it was worth a try. What I found was an amazing group of people who were very supportive and also in the same boat as me. I have been able to lose some weight and I still have more to lose, but what I needed even more than that was to be in a Bible study group that would bring me closer to God. Through this program I have gotten back to Bible study and discussion with our weekly meetings. I have learned that there is more to being healthy than just losing weight and that God is on my side and helping me through the process.

Orientation Meeting required for new members

Monday, January 14

6:15 – 7:15 p.m.

Memorial Parlor

You'll have the opportunity to view the materials, ask questions, and learn what to expect on your journey to a new you.

First Place 4 Health

Mondays, January 21 – April 18

6:15 – 7:15 p.m.

Memorial Parlor

Visit www.FirstPlace4Health.com for additional program information and testimonials.

Visit wroc.westminster-church.org for details and registration.

Registration for the WROC winter fitness programs is underway!

Here are a few of the fitness classes being offered. Please visit our website for a complete listing and to register online.

Adult Open Basketball
Adult Open Volleyball
Arthritis Exercise*

Chair Aerobics to Broadway Tunes*
Delay the Disease –
Parkinson's Fitness Program

Tai Chi*
Zumba
* 55+ friendly class

Chatham Baroque at Westminster

The Art of the Trio

Friday, January 4

7:30 p.m.

Galbreath Chapel

Begin the new year with the bright and expressive sounds of Chatham Baroque in the warmth of Galbreath Chapel, where the acoustics are ideal and the performers are close to the audience.

The three artistic directors of Chatham Baroque have begun their second decade together as a trio. Each season, they celebrate their friendship and years of collaboration with a program showcasing the full range of musical expression and command of their respective instruments.

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.

This concert was rescheduled from November 2018.



Save the Dates

Three February Concerts at Westminster

When the month of February comes, spring seems so far away and our spirits often sag. Chase away the winter blues with the inspiring beauty and warmth of music.

The Pittsburgh Camerata at Westminster

Music of the Spheres
Saturday, February 2
7:30 p.m., Sanctuary

The universe beckons with images of spheres: our earthly globe, heavenly celestial bodies, the very sky that greets us each morning. Journey with the Camerata beyond our earthly existence, as we pique our imaginations to the sights and sounds of the universe.

Tickets may be purchased at the door or online at www.pittsburghcamerata.org.

Chatham Baroque at Westminster

Cupid's Harp
Friday, February 15
7:30 p.m., Galbreath Chapel

Celebrate Valentine's Day with a love-filled program of music from Italy and England. Songs by Dowland, Purcell, and Monteverdi are sure to make you swoon. With guest tenor Aaron Sheehan and Baroque harpist Christa Patton.

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.

Tsar Lazar Serbian Men's Choir and Carica Milica Serbian Women's Choir

Conductors *Snezana Lazich and George Milosh*
Saturday, February 23
7:30 p.m., Sanctuary
Freewill offering

Enjoy the ethereal music of the Serbian tradition as it swirls around our sanctuary. George Milosh, one of the conductors and Westminster's tenor section leader, learned music of the Serbian Orthodox Church from his early years. George is currently working toward his Master of Music degree in voice performance at West Virginia University. He also sings with the Pittsburgh Camerata and is sought after as a soloist in the Pittsburgh area.

Presbyterians and Mission

Mission has been a priority at Westminster Presbyterian Church for over seven decades. Our focus on mission has a long heritage among Presbyterians in the United States. For more than 200 years, U.S. Presbyterians have responded to the call of Jesus Christ by proclaiming and living out our faith, laboring with love and energy to promote God's justice in the world. Local churches rely on guidance and resources from our church's national Presbyterian Mission Agency. The new year is a fitting time to recognize the work and resources for mission that are available to us at Westminster. It is also a good time to remember that as Presbyterians, we all work together in mission.

An Introduction to the Presbyterian Mission Agency

Presbyterian Mission is the national ministry arm of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the largest of the PC(USA)'s six General Assembly agencies. We joyfully partner with congregations, mid councils, worshiping communities, mission networks, and many other groups to nurture and support Christ's disciples wherever the Holy Spirit leads and the General Assembly directs us.

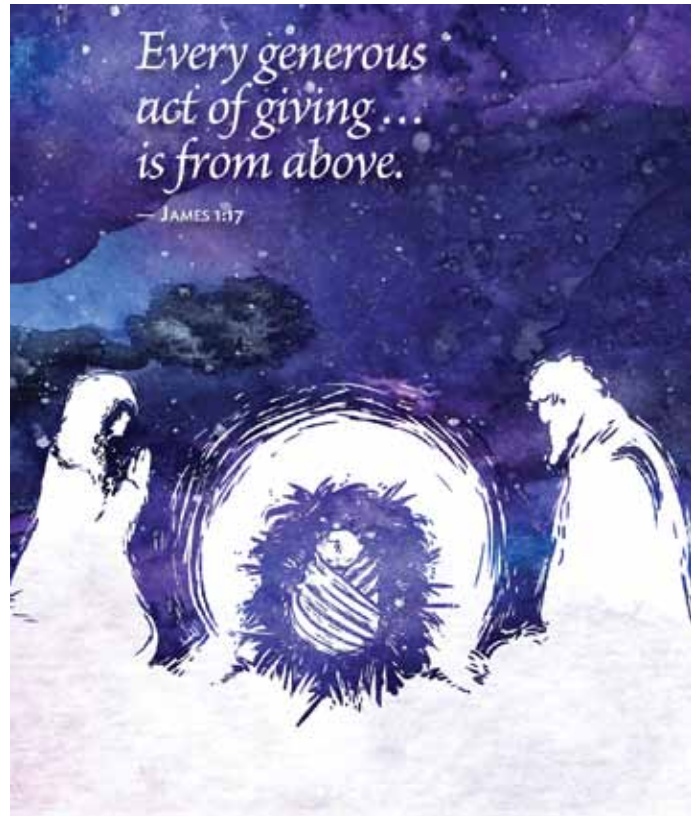
Presbyterian Mission's goal is to inspire, equip, and connect the church in three main areas: evangelism and discipleship, servant leader formation, and justice and reconciliation. We do this work through four ministry areas:

- **Compassion, Peace & Justice**
- **Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries**
- **Theology, Formation & Evangelism**
- **World Mission**

In fulfilling these goals, we regularly engage congregations, mid councils, and other entities. We also offer additional assistance through several departments, including:

- **Research Services**, which offers research, statistics, and custom surveys and program evaluations;
- **Mission Engagement & Support**, a comprehensive source for stewardship and discipleship resources and training;
- **Communications**, which runs the Presbyterian News Service and offers onsite workshops on storytelling, social media, web and digital communications, and a variety of other services that support our mission and ministry.

To learn more about the Presbyterian Mission Agency, visit www.presbyterianmission.org. You will find news, information, resources, articles, and devotional reflections.



*We all are one in mission; we all are one in call,
our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all.
A single great commission compels us from above
to plan and work together that all may know Christ's love.*

*We all are called for service to witness in God's name.
our ministries are different; our purpose is the same:
to touch the lives of others by God's surprising grace,
so every folk and nation may feel God's warm embrace.*

*Now let us be united and let our song be heard.
Now let us be a vessel for God's redeeming word.
We all are one in mission; we all are one in call,
our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all.*

— Rusty Edwards, 1985
Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal



*Morning Run, photograph by Christian Kothe
Creative Commons license via flickr*

Embracing the Gift of Life and Living Healthfully

Popular culture all over the world spells it out. We should aspire to live a healthy lifestyle. And we surely do. In the spirit of living healthfully, gym memberships will soar with the beginning of the new year. Roughly half of us will resolve to lose weight or improve our fitness.

It's a big business. Gym memberships are growing year after year, setting new records. Whether or not we have time to work out, we want to give that appearance, so athleisure togs are becoming a half-trillion-dollar industry worldwide. For yoga pants alone, we're spending a billion dollars a year.

Personal Responsibility for Health

All of this flows from a perfectly reasonable proposition. People should take personal responsibility for their health. That means we need healthy habits – a healthful, balanced diet, plenty of sleep, and healthy physical activity.

But personal responsibility offers no guarantees. Jobs and schoolwork keep us glued to our seats and computer screens. Even if we make it to the gym for a workout, it doesn't cancel out the effects of eight daily hours of sedentary desk work. Convenience and taste appeal often win out when people choose what to eat. Let's face it. We tell ourselves that we're trying to eat healthfully. But mostly we're eating what's at hand.

Bodies Beautiful and Frail

Our bodies are a beautiful gift from God. But they are also frail and diverse. Some people enjoy the gift of a near perfect gene pool that gives them great odds of a long life mostly free from chronic diseases. Others find themselves contending with serious health issues early in life or throughout their lives. You might find a reason for those health issues. Nobody has perfect health habits. But the truth is that few people choose bad health. It chooses them.

And so it is that each of us can enjoy a pure gift of grace from God in our lives and our health. And at the same time, we will all have to face the limits of mortality. Sooner or later our health will fail in some way. We might heal and come back for many more years of good health. We can take action to improve our odds. Or we might struggle regardless.

Mortal Lives

But all the personal responsibility in the world will not free us from the limits of this mortal life. Only God can do that.

So, resolutions for living a healthier lifestyle might best be viewed as a response to God's grace. They can help us to make the most of the lives he's given us. But we still need God to help us live gracefully within the limits of this mortal life.

– Ted Kyle

Ted is a Westminster member, elder, pharmacist, and advocate for sound health policy.

Caring Notes

Question: What is the chief purpose of life?

In the recent Foundations Class at Westminster Church a group of us pondered this question as we explored the church's core beliefs: the Trinity, the Bible as God's Word, the Church being God's people here and now, and Salvation, which is God's gift of grace for us.

Our discussion led us back to our roots as Presbyterians as found in the Westminster Confession. A quick note: A Confession is a statement of beliefs – not to be confused with the prayer of confession we make each Sunday in worship when we confess our sins before God. A Confession of the church states its faith and bears witness to God's grace in Jesus Christ. The Book of Confessions contains statements for our church that declare to its members and to the world who and what it is, what it believes, and what it resolves to do. We recite the Apostles' Creed from the Book of Confessions each month.

Now back to the Westminster Confession. Tucked in this historic creed is the answer we seek. (This was written in 1649 so we have to be generous about the language.)

Q. What is the chief end of man? A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

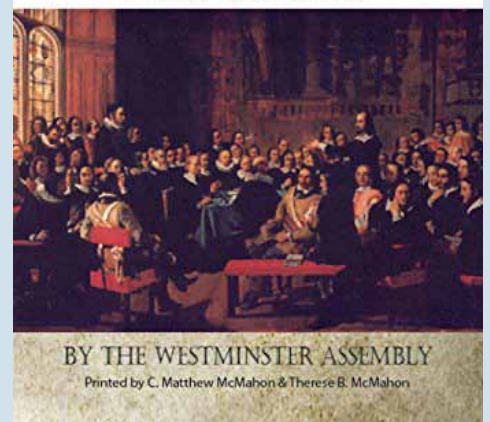
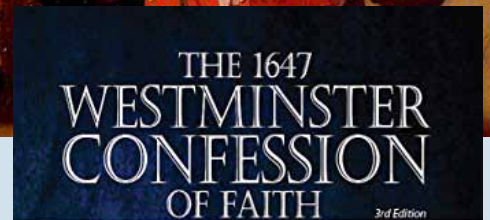
There we have it! We should glorify God and enjoy God forever.

Are you enjoying God in your life? If not, perhaps this is an opportune time to slow down and intentionally take time to get to know God. A good place to begin is by spending time reading God's word or drawing close to God in worship. You might consider carving out time to sit with God in silence, or to care for others through service, or to lift your petitions to the Lord in prayer. Taking a walk to notice the beauty of the creation and saying thank you to God can lift your spirit.

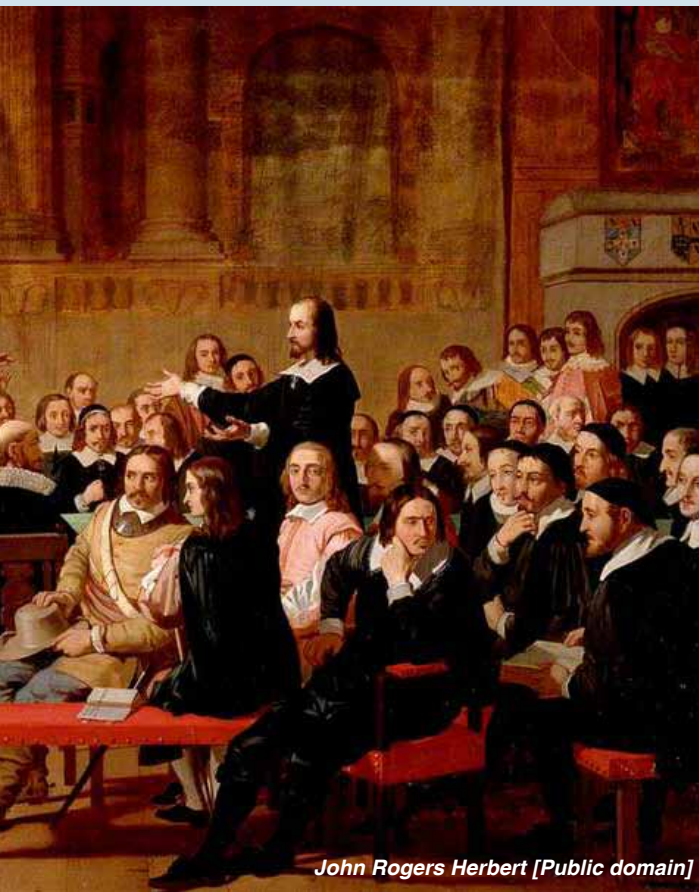
God loves us so much and wants to be connected to our lives to bring happiness and purpose as we experience his love for us and share this with others. The Lord has been welcoming men and women into his joyful company since creation began. The believers who gathered to write the Westminster Confession centuries ago discovered a delightful truth that still holds for us today. As the Scriptures guide us, "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near."

Wishing you much joy in the coming year as we journey together,

Louise



“Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.”



John Rogers Herbert [Public domain]

A meeting of the Westminster Assembly on February 21, 1644. Philip Nye, a member of the independent party, argues that the form of church government advocated by the Presbyterians, under which local congregations submit to higher assemblies of elders, was “thrice over pernicious, to civil states and kingdoms.” He was immediately “cried down,” according to Robert Baillie, who kept a journal of the proceedings. The painting depicts many individuals who were not members of the Assembly, because when issues of particular interest were debated, non-members would attend as spectators. Josias Shute, however, died before the Assembly met.

– Wikimedia Commons

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ile he is near.”

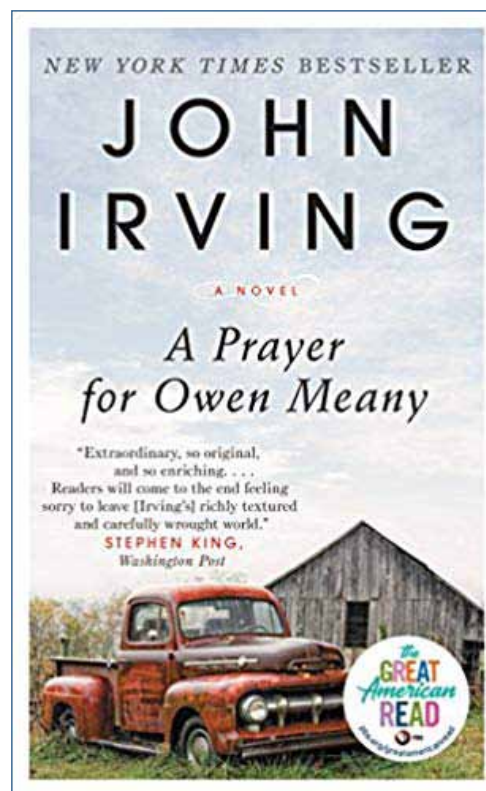
Westminster Book Group

Wednesday, January 30
Noon – 1:15 p.m.

The Westminster Book Group will meet on Wednesday, January 30, at noon in the Yahweh Café. We will discuss *A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving, a PBS “Great American Read” top 100 book. We invite you to bring a brown bag lunch and join us.

From the book:

“I am doomed to remember a boy with a wrecked voice – not because of his voice, or because he was the smallest person I ever knew, or even because he was the instrument of my mother’s death, but because he is the reason I believe in God; I am a Christian because of Owen Meany.”

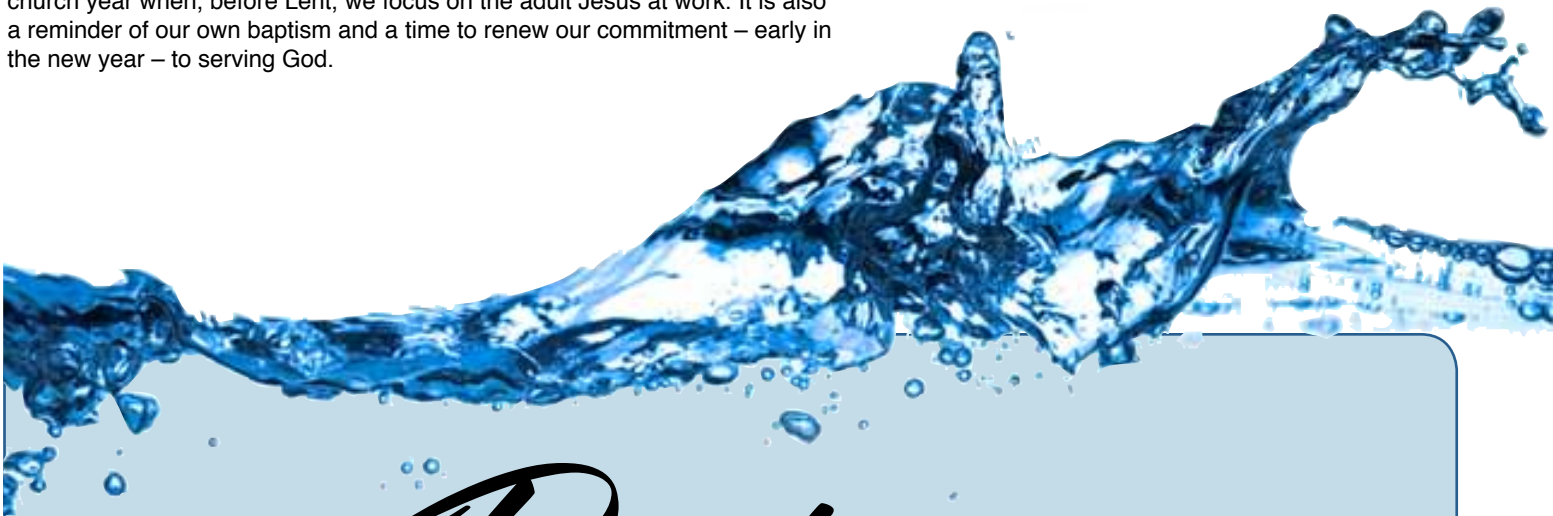


Baptism of the Lord

Renewal of Faith in January

Luke 3: 21-22 – Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

The special Sunday known as “Baptism of the Lord” comes after Epiphany. It observes the start of Jesus’ earthly ministry and begins the time in the church year when, before Lent, we focus on the adult Jesus at work. It is also a reminder of our own baptism and a time to renew our commitment – early in the new year – to serving God.



Baptisms

June 24

Anthony Bernard
Parents:
Leigh & Jim Rizzo

September 16

Charlotte Grace
Parents:
Nicole & Robert Beck

November 18

Maren Brooks
Parents:
Erica & Michael Anderson

Asher Nicholas

Parents:
Cynthia & Matthew Bittel

Ashlynn Coral, Declan Sawyer,
Shyla Lily
Parents:
Holly & Beaux DeLattre

Parker Matthew

Parents:
Savannah & Matt Bucey

Connor William
Parents:
Angela & William Kunkel III

What Is Per Capita?

The official definition of per capita is “an opportunity for all communicant members of the Presbyterian church through the governing bodies to participate equally, responsibly, and interdependently by sharing the cost of coordination and evaluation of mission; and of performing ecclesiastical, legislative, and judicial functions that identify a Reformed Church, while at the same time strengthening the sense of community among all Presbyterians” (GA Minutes, Part I, 1995).

In other words, per capita is a set amount of money (apportionment) per member that congregations pay to the larger Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Another way to look at it is that per capita is a Presbyterian Covenant Community Fund – part of the glue that holds Presbyterians together. Because every Presbyterian shares in the benefit of the PC(USA)’s system of government, the expenses associated with coordinating and performing the functions of that system are shared by everyone as well.

Please remember to forward your 2019 per capita apportionment to the Finance Office anytime after January 1, 2019. **The amount set by Pittsburgh Presbytery for 2019 is \$33.05 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 “2019 Per Capita” on the memo line of your check. If you have any questions regarding this apportionment, please contact the church business administrator at 412-835-6630x201. **Thank you.**

Session Update

On December 17, Session received an update on matters involving our former church business administrator and all the steps being taken to rectify the situation. Members of Session are kept fully informed, but it’s important that a degree of confidentiality be preserved while an investigation is under way.

Session also renewed the hiring of Jason Freyer for another year as associate pastor, and approved a budget for 2019. Progress continues in the search for an interim senior pastor to begin this spring, while the Pastor Nominating Committee held its first meeting in preparation for eventually calling a new senior pastor. The annual meeting of the congregation will be January 27, following the 11:00 service.

Deaths

Will Morris

November 22





**WESTMINSTER
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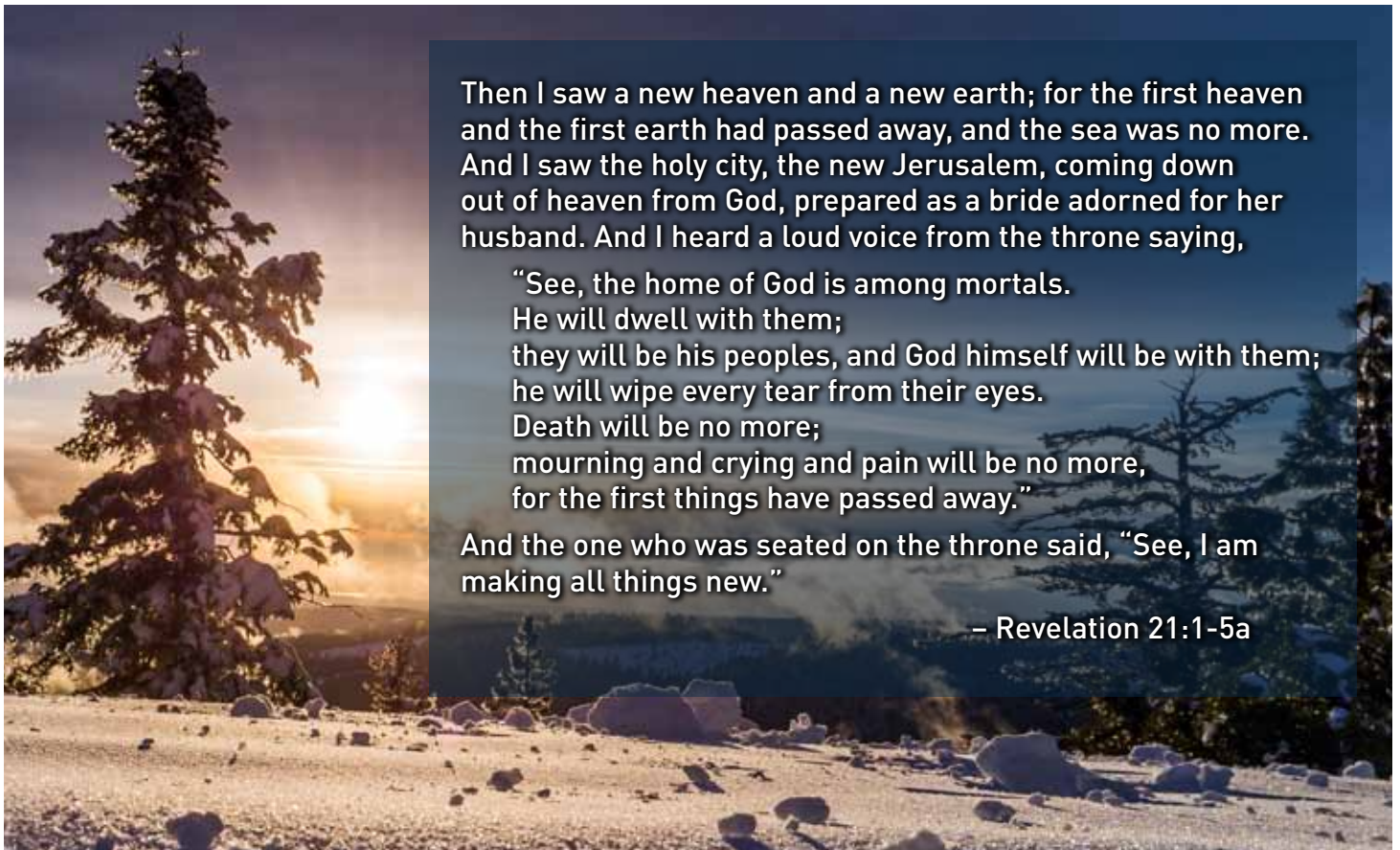
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Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them;
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.”

And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.”

– Revelation 21:1-5a