



# THE SPIRE

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
Pittsburgh, PA

At the turn of the year, you may resolve to make changes in your life, either to leave behind some bad habits or discipline yourself to those you think may help you thrive.

Regardless of what you decide to do, set your intention for how you will respond to events.

The year ahead will present some joyous events – graduations, births, weddings, new loves, or new jobs. In light of these, the Apostle Paul would advocate: “Rejoice in the Lord, always.” As much as we may work toward the goal, we owe our gratitude and glory to God.

Some of us also know the year ahead will hold losses and disappointments – whether we see the ominous signs already or just trust our gut. Bonds will be broken between two people. A job ends. Someone dies. Natural disaster strikes in our backyard and not someone else’s. The Apostle Paul would also advocate: “Rejoice in the Lord.”

Paul wrote his letter to the church in Philippi while he was imprisoned for preaching the gospel. Those recipients of his letter were also under siege for living out their faith in Jesus. Despite their mutual hardship Paul called them to rejoice in the Lord.

The preposition “in” is key. Paul’s letter reminds us, we always live “in” God’s care. In. At the times of joy, rejoice in God’s blessing.

Amidst heartache or loss, we are humbled by what little we can control or how deeply we can grieve. But, no matter how hard it becomes, we are always “in” God’s realm.

Real and lasting joy comes from the confidence that, no matter what happens, we are connected to one another and inseparably connected to God through Jesus Christ. We are not always free to determine what happens to us, but we are free to choose how we will respond to whatever happens. We are commanded to rejoice in the Lord, not in the circumstances of our lives.

“Rejoice in the Lord.” It is not that we are to rejoice only in good times or in spite of our circumstances. It is not even

that we are to rejoice through gritted teeth, but rather, rejoice in that we are always found in God and God can always lift us from darkness.

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.*

*Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

—Philippians 4:4-7

Blessings to you in the New Year,  
Jo Forrest

Rejoice  
IN THE LORD ALWAYS

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Read the *Spire* online at: [www.westminster-church.org](http://www.westminster-church.org)

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# Worship at Westminster




All are welcome to join Westminster for worship! At the 8:30 and 11:00 a.m. traditional services, we invite those who are fully vaccinated to worship without a mask and strongly encourage those who are not vaccinated to wear a mask. At the 9:45 a.m. Bridge service, masks are required of all attendees regardless of vaccination status.

If you are not comfortable attending in person worship or are traveling, visit our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/user/WestminsterUSC](http://www.youtube.com/user/WestminsterUSC) or our website for links to the livestream services at 9:45 and 11:00 a.m., or watch anytime later on YouTube.

## Bridge Contemporary Worship

 Sundays
 9:45 a.m.
 WROC & YouTube Livestream

## Traditional Worship

 Sundays
 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.
 Sanctuary & YouTube Livestream (11:00 a.m. only)

*The Lord's Supper is celebrated the first Sunday of each month.*

## Upcoming Events

**06**  
JAN Epiphany of the Lord

**07**  
JAN Officers Retreat

**09**  
JAN Baptism of the Lord

**23**  
JAN Ordination & Installation of Officers

# Epiphany

*When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

– Matthew 2:10-11

“From this story, we should learn how to bear ourselves aright toward our Lord Jesus Christ. That is, we should cast aside all offence, and together with these wise men witness before the world to the Lord Christ, see him from the bottom of our hearts, and adore him as our Savior. And because his reign on earth is so poor and wretched, we should with our gold, goods, and whole possessions gladly help to further and increase his kingdom, which is in so many ways suppressed and hindered by the devil and the world. For on this very day we can still open to Christ our treasures and present them to him, as the wise men did. And how? Behold, his word is written (Matthew 25:40): ‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.’”

– Martin Luther, Sermon for Epiphany, 1544

# Baptism of the Lord

On the Sunday after Epiphany, the church celebrates the baptism of Christ by John the Baptist. This event happened when crowds of people came to be baptized by John and began to wonder if John was the Messiah. In Luke 3, as paraphrased in Eugene Peterson's *The Message*, John answered the crowd and described what happened when Jesus was baptized:

"I'm baptizing you here in the river. The main character in this drama, to whom I'm a mere stagehand, will ignite the kingdom life, a fire, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from inside out. He's going to clean house – make a clean sweep of your lives. He'll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he'll put out with the trash to be burned."

After all the people were baptized, Jesus was baptized. As he was praying, the sky opened up and the Holy Spirit, like a dove descending, came down on him. And along with the Spirit, a voice: "You are my Son, chosen and marked by my love, pride of my life."

After this, the Holy Spirit led Jesus to the wilderness, where he fasted for 40 days and nights and was tested by the devil. Jesus then returned to Galilee to begin his ministry on earth. As we remember this part of Jesus' life in early January, each of us can remember our own baptism and rededicate ourselves to God's service, living out the message of Christ our Lord.



## Baptisms

**November 21**

**Landon Caleb Bucey**

*parents: Savannah and Matthew Bucey*

**Austin William Bundschuh**

*parents: Carolyn and Mark Bundschuh*

**Penn William Rupert**

**Linden Rose Rupert**

*parents: Erin and Ryan Rupert*

**November 21**

**Bodie Bennett Senge**

*parents: Joseph and Lindsay Senge*

**November 28**

**Shane Odell Holloway**

*parents: Kelly and Brian Holloway*

**December 19**

**Kameron Nicole Locy**

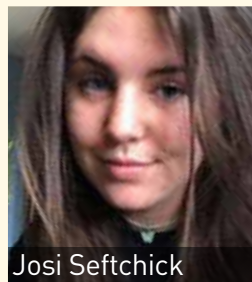
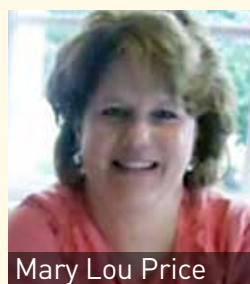
# Welcome to the Latest Class of Deacons at Westminster Church!

The deacons minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress both within and beyond the community of faith. We are grateful to all the deacons who serve the congregation with acts of compassion. This coming year Kevin Green will be moderator, Ian Thomas vice moderator, Lindsay Senge secretary, and Jim Roberts treasurer. Each one of the deacons is assigned to a particular committee, such as the Blood Drives, Treasures for Troops, Care Calls, Snappy Spiritual Team, or Giving Gala, in order to serve the congregation. Please feel free to reach out to any of the deacons if we can be of assistance.

Happy New Year,

Louise

*Welcome*



## Westminster Seminars

### In Person and Online

Sundays, 9:45 – 10:30 a.m.  
Galbreath Chapel & Zoom

The Westminster Seminars address, in various ways, how our beliefs and practices as Christians enrich our lives in today's culture. Everyone is welcome – come every week or whenever the topic appeals and your schedule allows. If you can't join in person or on Zoom, plan to watch or listen later on the Westminster website – under News & Media – here: <https://www.westminster-church.org/news-&-media/westminster-seminars>.

The Zoom meeting opens at 9:30 for greetings and conversation. Find the link on the church website under Featured Events or in the Friday church email.

## January Series begins on the 9th

As we enter a new year of caring for our minds and our bodies, the Westminster Seminars welcome three experts in matters of mental and spiritual health. Ed Sutter is Director of Youth Ministry and Family Counseling at Westminster. Graham Standish is Executive Director of Samaritan Counseling, Guidance, Consulting. Tom Kneier is a counselor with Samaritan.

## Mind and Body

We pray for ourselves – body, mind, and spirit. Where does our mental health fit in? During these turbulent days as we navigate the stresses from the pandemic, pressure of work, an uncertain future, and worries for our families and loved ones, we experience anxiety.

Come to the January seminars to name and claim our mental health as we seek God. Over the four weeks, we will discuss the following areas of our mental health:

**January 9** – Ed Sutter: Our Emotional Health

**January 16** – Graham Standish: Our Spiritual Health

**January 23** – Tom Kneier: Our Self Care: Do I Need a Permission Slip for This?

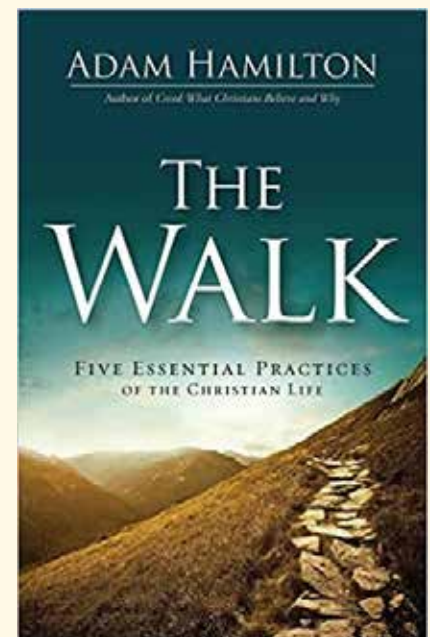
**January 30** – Tom Kneier: Mental Health: Can My PCP Write a Prescription for This?

## Book Study with Louise Rogers

Monday mornings: January 10, 17, 24, 31  
10:00 a.m. on Zoom

We will talk about spiritual practices from the book *The Walk* by Adam Hamilton. In *The Walk*, Hamilton focuses on five essential spiritual practices that are rooted in Jesus' own walk with God and taught throughout the New Testament.

Each of these practices is a part of our daily walk with Christ and an essential part of growing together in the church. The five essential practices of worship, study, serving, giving, and sharing our faith will deepen your walk with God too. It is suggested that you pick up the book and read for the class. But whether you read ahead or not, everyone is welcome.



# Westminster Book Group

**Wednesday, January 26**  
**Noon – 1:15 p.m.**  
**Room 238**

At the next meeting of the Westminster Book Group, we will discuss *The Miracle Worker*, a play by William Gibson. You are invited to bring a brown bag lunch and join us.

“Based on the remarkable true story of Helen Keller and her teacher, Annie Sullivan, this inspiring and unforgettable play has moved countless readers and become an American classic.”

– Amazon



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## CHILDREN & FAMILIES

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# People of Hope

Recently at JAM, we have been discussing hope. What do we hope for? What gives us hope? For me, hearing 5th and 6th graders share their hopes certainly filled me with hope. “For my family and friends to be happy.” “To grow up into a good person.” “For other kids to have it better than me.” Likewise, hearing about where they find their hope was inspiring. “When I come to JAM, and there are other people here who are also interested in talking about God.” “When I am anxious, but I know there are adults who I can talk to.” Hope is alive and well in the youth at JAM. Praise God!

As one year ends, and a new year begins, we often find ourselves reflecting on our hopes. I encourage you to ask yourself the same questions we wondered about at JAM.

We ended our discussion by wondering about what it means to be a “people of hope.” We know that Christmas isn’t the end of the story. Jesus is born and baptized and begins God’s kingdom work here on Earth. So as you enter a new year, how can you put your hopes into action? What work can you do to bring those hopes one step closer to reality?

– Faith Kemmler



## Book Review

# Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption

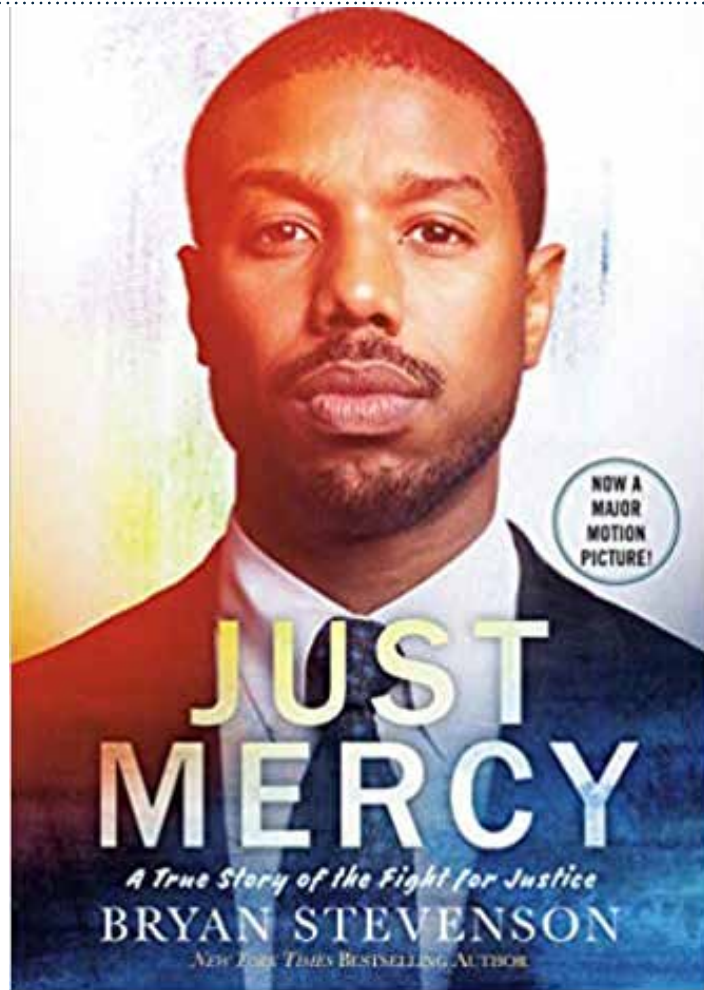
by Bryan Stevenson

Many books addressing social justice have an edge, but Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy* has a heart. This is a book of stories, full of heartbreak and hope. There is the story of Henry, whom Bryan meets on death row, waiting to be assigned his execution date, not wanting his family to know when it is coming for fear of the pain it will cause them. There is the story of Walter who, though innocent, spent six years on death row in Alabama's Holman prison, and of Stevenson's work that led to his exoneration and release. There are stories of children being tried, sentenced, and incarcerated as adults, and of Stevenson pressing for changes in laws governing this.

There are stories that make us angry, where Black people are barred from jury service, and poor people are assigned inept attorneys who are later disbarred. And stories so awful that it is hard to bear – dogs being brought into the courtroom specifically to terrify Black people who had seen dogs in other terrifying circumstances, mentally ill prisoners being abused, people on death row with no hope. But then there is the hope filled story of the “stonecatchers,” named with a biblical echo of Jesus interrupting the stoning of a woman by inviting anyone without sin to cast the first stone. In Stevenson's life, the stonecatchers intercept those stones thrown by an unfair legal system.

Overarching all of this is the story of the author as a young law student finding his way to a life of service to those unfairly imprisoned. He tells of being uncertain of what he wanted to do with his life, and how on his first day as a young intern, he visited a man on death row and had no idea what to say. When he fumbled the meeting and angered the guard, the prisoner said, “That's OK, just please come back.” Stevenson did come back many times and over the years they developed a deep friendship.

He tells about meeting Rosa Parks, who, when he told her of his many ideas for helping the incarcerated, leaned toward him with a smile and said, “Ooooh honey, all that work's going to make you tired, tired, tired.” And her friend who was listening shook her finger at him saying, “That's why you have to be brave, brave, brave.” And he did get tired, but he was brave, and he stood before the power structures of the Alabama legal system to serve the most vulnerable among us.



In 1989 Bryan Stevenson founded Equal Justice Initiative (EJI).<sup>\*</sup> *Just Mercy* tells of EJI in its infancy, with Bryan sleeping in its tiny office and on friends' sofas. From this fragile beginning, EJI grew into a force for justice with dozens of attorneys, interns, and fellows. Their clients are poor and mostly Black; all are people who have been unjustly served by our judicial system. While there are many whose names we will not remember, the most highly publicized of EJI's clients is Anthony Ray Hinton, released from death row in 2015 after 30 years. *Just Mercy* shines light on the details of the case and gives us a view into the dishonesty, ineptitude, and plain old racial prejudice that lies beneath so many of these cases. Of this case Stevenson says, “Race, poverty, inadequate legal assistance, and prosecutorial indifference to innocence conspired to create a textbook example of injustice. I can't think of a case that more urgently dramatizes the need for reform than what has happened to Anthony Ray Hinton.”

There are days when we feel overwhelmed with all that's wrong in the world. On these days, *Just Mercy* will warm our hearts and stir our souls, and maybe make us brave.

– Bobbie Hartman

<sup>\*</sup>Equal Justice Initiative is one of Westminster's Outreach Mission Partners.



# Silence for our lives

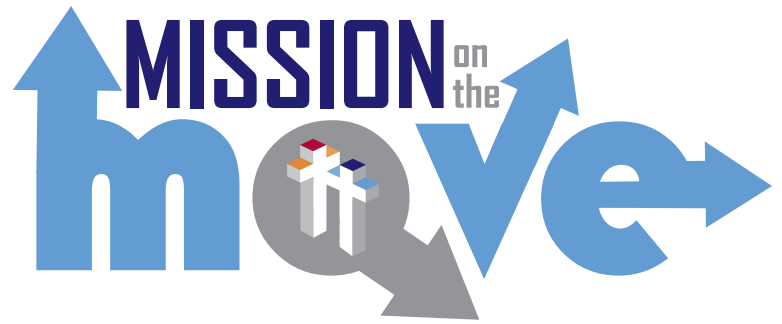
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*“We need to discover the inner desert of the heart, that ‘still point’ of love within us that empowers us to do new things. This center of love is God, the inner power who seeks to evolve, to become more conscious and unified: ‘Divine Love which moves the sun and the other stars.’”*

– Ilia Delia



MISSION ON THE MOVE



# Open Hand Ministries

Westminster, through our Outreach Commission, has supported Open Hand Ministries for many years. This support is oriented to long-term change as Open Hand (OHM) contributes to making Pittsburgh a just city for all. Why is this important to Westminster? Justice is a critical concept in over 20 Bible references, such as Isaiah 30:18 that states that “the Lord is a God of justice,” as well as many other Bible verses instructing Christians to stand up against injustice and love others with our words and actions.

The major injustice that OHM seeks to address is home ownership in Pittsburgh’s East End, where Black families own significantly fewer homes. Studies show that owning a home is the primary way Americans build wealth. This difference in the number of White versus Black families who own homes thus results in a stark difference in family wealth. In the 2019 Federal Reserve Survey of Consumer Finances, it was found that White families have the highest level of median family wealth: \$188,200. Black and Hispanic families have considerably less wealth than White families. Black families’ median wealth is less than 15 percent of White families, at \$24,100. This is important to know, but how can this injustice be addressed?



It is common to look at organizations and missions our church supports through a single lens, like thinking of SHIM as providing food pantries. Widen the lens and we understand that SHIM is youth programs, job help, a back-to-school program, community gardens, parent education, and much more. Similarly, Open Hand Ministries is probably known mostly to those who have volunteered there as house renovation. This is one aspect, essential to their work of doing real estate acquisition and rehabilitation while adhering to high energy and quality standards that result in affordable homes.

The bigger picture is that OHM helps families go from surviving to thriving. It does so by empowering Black families in Pittsburgh to build multi-generational wealth through improved financial management skills, with support on the path to achieving their financial goals.



Wealth building through homeownership has been the result for 16 families who have purchased their first house through OHM’s program. These families can now use their financial skills and home equity to benefit themselves and future generations. To support families on their way to owning a home, OHM also has transitional rental apartments that offer a stable place to live at a below-market rental rate in the East End. OHM saves part of the families’ rent payments in escrow for closing costs.

Not all families in OHM’s family development program pursue homeownership. Six or more in the last few years have opened businesses; others have bought a car, or pursued education goals by going back to college or finishing academic degrees. Achieving life goals is broader than owning a home and OHM opens doors to social capital and trusting relationships to embolden and build confidence for families to take action. Thirty families are opening doors to social capital to work on financial and other goals. Perhaps the greatest aspect of OHM has been

the creation of a caring community that is multi-age, multiracial, and interfaith, and that works across the racial and socio-economic divide. It is pretty remarkable, and requires constant effort to combat the divisions that are common in American life. OHM stands against these divisions and demonstrates what a caring community can achieve.



If you wish to help this ministry, consider any of the following:

- Volunteer to assist with preparing/ serving/cleanup the Tuesday evening OHM Teamworks meals on the first and fourth Tuesdays of the month. The meals and meetings are held in Eastminster Presbyterian Church in East Liberty.
- OHM families don't always have an opportunity to do things like Phipps or the Zoo, or visit Carnegie museums, so if anyone has a connection for tickets or can provide tickets, that would be exciting.
- Volunteer at the OHM first Saturday construction volunteer workdays. Sign up on their website in the "How to Help" tab – <https://openhandpgh.org/>.

– Will Hignett



OPEN  
HAND  
ministries



## Maoni Orphan Care in Malawi

In 2012 Kenneth and Christine Nsona, seeing a great need to support the children of their hometown of Blantyre, Malawi, founded a daycare program that today supports 100-150 children ages 2 to 4, with an energetic curriculum that includes engaging them in needed preschool lessons, singing, socializing, and just having fun. Many of these children have been orphaned by the AIDS epidemic in Malawi. They are fed a nutritious vitamin fortified lunch before they are dismissed for the day at noon.

Kenneth and Christine financially support this program that includes four teachers, four helpers, two cooks, a guard, books, school supplies, food, and the rental of the classroom. Funds come from the couple's farming and the raising and selling of pigs and chickens to the local markets. Over the years, the couple have enhanced their ability to farm year-round by using modern irrigation techniques supported by sound water management utilizing well water that is pumped, using solar power, into enclosed cisterns.

This whole enterprise is constantly challenged by the unpredictability of nature and the local selling markets for their livestock. Add to this the fact that Malawi is one of the poorest countries in Africa with one of the most under-supported and ill-equipped national healthcare systems in the world. The international pandemic has caused many disruptions to the lives and livelihoods of Malawi. Schools, including this program, have been interrupted at various times over this last year. Throughout the years and despite many challenges, Kenneth and Christine have persistently cared for and supported these children through love and dedication, acting on their faith that God calls us to help all those in need.

Additional financial support of this ministry has come from generous donations by Westminster members and, more recently, funding from the annual Westminster Outreach budget. In 2019, through this generous giving, Kenneth was able to purchase and install an additional water cistern to support irrigating more acreage of his crops, thus increasing the sustainability of his farming enterprise as well as the school. Funding of this kind has allowed his and Christine's ministry to flourish and grow.

This and many other Westminster outreach mission partners that are supported both financially and through helping hands, here and abroad, receive and utilize Westminster's gifts with grateful hearts. As we all look forward to the years to come, may we keep in our prayers Kenneth and Christine's childcare program and the many other extended ministries of Westminster that serve to enlarge God's kingdom here and around the world. Our church is truly blessed to be a blessing to others.

– Paul Conley

*WROC Talk*

# "What's It Worth?" Antiques Road Show

**Tuesday, February 15**

**6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

**Fellowship Hall (masks required)**

**Cost:** Free; registration required

**Instructor:** Michael Ivankovich via Zoom

Join us as we welcome author, auctioneer, appraiser, and radio show host Mike Ivankovich via Zoom in Fellowship Hall.

Mike will begin the program with a brief discussion on the "10 Factors That Will Always Impact the Value of Your Treasures." He will then transition to the appraisal portion of the program, evaluating the first 30 registered attendees' treasures, one by one. It is recommended you bring a back-up item in the event Mike is unable to virtually appraise your first choice. Throughout the program Mike will share many buying and selling tips and strategies.

Once registered, you will receive a confirmation indicating you are one of the first 30 registered attendees and eligible to have an item virtually appraised.

No treasures? Just come and enjoy the show!



*Mike Ivankovich has been involved in some phase of the antiques and collectibles business for more than 40 years. He is a frequent lecturer and has spoken to groups too numerous to list. He has authored more than 20 books and ebooks in his areas of specialty and has written articles and columns for most major national trade papers. He is the host of the What's It Worth? Ask Mike the Appraiser radio show that airs every Friday morning from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. on WBCB 1490 AM in Philadelphia, PA.*

## WROC Fitness Classes for Winter 2022

We continue to offer a full range of fitness classes while keeping COVID safety protocols in mind.

- Cardio Kickboxing
- Cardio Strength Fusion
- Parkinson's Fitness
- Strong Bodies/Strong Bones (maintain and build bone strength)
- Tai Chi
- Yoga (Gentle, Hatha, Vinyasa)
- Yoga4cancer – yoga and meditation for cancer recovery
- Zumba (Morning, Evening, and Saturday)

Visit [wroc.westminster-church.org](http://wroc.westminster-church.org) for details and registration.

# Racial Wealth Gap Learning Simulation

Sunday, February 6

2:30-4:30 p.m.

Fellowship Hall

Sign up here: <https://www.westminster-church.org/events/event-list/racial-wealth-gap-learning-simulation>



## What is the Racial Wealth Gap?

We all know that Black families struggle financially more than White families. But without Googling it – just take a guess – what is the comparative median wealth of White families to Black? Maybe twice the wealth for White families? Maybe five times? You might be surprised to know that, according to the Pew Research Center, this ratio is about 13:1. As Christians whom Jesus calls to serve brothers and sisters in need, and as American patriots with a vision of fairness, we are alarmed by this.

## So how did we get here?

It is the cumulative nature of wealth that gives rise to the growing gap across racial lines. Early in our country's history, Black citizens could not vote. This excluded them from working within the system to shape fair financial policies. Most Blacks also were not permitted to own property. This left them behind while White families saw their wealth begin to accumulate through inheritance and increasing property values. These are just two of a dozen or so policies that worked to the benefit of White families, and much less so to Black families.

This is not about whether we can afford stylish clothing or an expensive car. The consequences of this wealth gap are much more far-reaching. They contribute to whether one can buy a home at all, let alone one in a strong school district. They help decide whether our children can afford a college education without wiping out our life's savings. These are wealth questions. And where you own and if and where you go to college can move you ahead on the wealth ladder or push you off altogether. These and other questions shape our financial futures. And they are not linear effects but are multiplicative.

## The Racial Wealth Gap Learning Simulation

At the very least, we need to know our history, and there are many pieces to this puzzle. Bread for the World, one of Westminster's mission partners, has developed a Racial Wealth Gap Learning Simulation to help us begin to sort out how these gross inequities developed.

## The simulation:

- Randomly assigns designation of Black or White to each participant.
- Examines 13 public policies beginning in 1865 and continuing until the present.
- Compares the effects of each of these policies on both Black and White families.
- Distills these into categories of land, money, and opportunities and tallies the changes for Black and White families through history.

## Does this simulation reflect reality?

No model is perfect, and all models incorporate approximations. But a good model is useful in making predictions. This simulation produced a 13:1 ratio of White to Black wealth, which correlates well with the known data where median White wealth is about \$141,000, compared to Black wealth of \$11,000.

## What to expect:

We'll gather in Fellowship Hall where we'll sit at tables in small groups. We'll have simple refreshments while we share our thoughts about what we've learned and think together about how we might respond.

The Rev. Liddy Barlow of Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania will lead us in what will be, at minimum, informative, and could strengthen our mission focus. And even for those of us who haven't been in school for a while, it will be an engaging way to learn.

The event is free, but we need to know how many participants to expect. Please sign up here: <https://www.westminster-church.org/events/event-list/racial-wealth-gap-learning-simulation>, indicating the number attending, whether you will need childcare, and the number and ages of the children. Masks and proof of COVID-19 vaccinations are required. **Signup deadline is Thursday, February 3. Registration is limited to 60.** Contact Bobbie Hartman at [hartman1967@verizon.net](mailto:hartman1967@verizon.net) with questions.

# A Righteous View of Healthy Eating

With the start of the new year, many of us are thinking about how to eat and live more healthfully in the year ahead. We have many different prophets telling us that they have the word on what really constitutes healthful eating and living. Obviously, good health and good food come in many different forms in many different cultures.

In her new book, *How the Other Half Eats*, Priya Fielding-Singh expands on this very idea. But she tells us the dominant culture often presents a narrow definition of a healthy diet. This happens because we often fix our attention on the merits and faults of specific foods or nutrients. She writes:

“Certain items are included in the ‘good’ and ‘healthy’ category while others are excluded and portrayed as ‘bad’ and ‘unhealthy.’ These acts of inclusion and exclusion certainly have something to do with the foods’ nutritional properties, but they also have a lot to do with these foods’ cultural and racial associations and histories. Foods are classified as healthy not just because of what they are but also because of what they represent and who they have been historically produced and consumed by.

“Discourses around soul food underscore this point. There’s a reason why people sing the praises of kale but not collard greens.”

## The bias we bring to thinking about health and nutrition

In an interview for *Science Friday*, Fielding-Singh told Roxanne Khamsi that social constructs of race and class have a clear influence on ideas about healthy:

“Our understandings of what healthy foods are, what a healthy body is, are fundamentally shaped by our understandings of race and class.”

So the dominant culture becomes the source of ideas about what is healthy and good. Racial and ethnic disparities in health are wide and becoming wider. And thus, associations between diet and health might or might not always reflect the health effects of diet. Rather, they might reflect the fact that some dietary patterns serve as signals for racial and ethnic identities. Along with those identities may come social and economic deprivation that can have a bigger effect on health.

## Food has meaning beyond physical health

In her research, Fielding-Singh has found that food has symbolic value that is very different for people of different



A meal by Carl Bloch, 1859.

social and economic status (SES). With research published in 2017, she found that high-SES parents feed children to reflect their values about health and parenting. By contrast, she learned that low-SES parents provide food as a buffer against deprivation.

Perhaps not surprising, dietary behavior can easily become a subtly racist rationalization for health disparities. In the *American Journal of Public Health*, Mary Bassett and Jasmine Graves wrote:

“There are two main racist ideas that dominate explanations of Black–White disparities in health, arguments extended to all non-Whites. The first argument is the biological inferiority of non-Whites. The second, presently more dominant, holds that defects among Blacks lie not in genetic makeup, but in behavior.”

Food is far more than mere medicine. It is an expression of who we are – who and what we love. When we use a narrow lens for our view of what is healthy nutrition, we reinforce systemic bias that fuels health disparities.

Perhaps some of the energy that goes into “educating” people to eat “right” would have better effect if it went into reducing social and economic disparities that are fundamentally unjust. If we wish to follow God’s call to love our neighbor, we will need to be sure we understand that neighbor.

Visit <https://www.marketplace.org/2021/11/17/how-economic-inequality-affects-the-american-diet/> for interviews with Fielding-Singh. For more about her new book, visit <https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-316-42726-5>.

– Ted Kyle

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

# Financial Report

As of November 30, 2021

NOVEMBER 2021	Actual	Budget
Income	\$205,315	\$137,638
Expense	\$175,293	\$116,139
Variance	\$30,022	\$21,499

YTD 2021	Actual	Budget
Income	\$1,721,414	\$1,548,756
Expense	\$1,745,142	\$1,681,159
Variance	(\$23,728)	(\$132,409)

**ENDOWMENT  
LOAN BALANCE** \$1,046,028

# Deaths

**Phyllis C. Klafehn**  
*November 19*

**Merritt Joy Gillen**  
*December 1*

**Elizabeth C. Myers**  
*December 10*

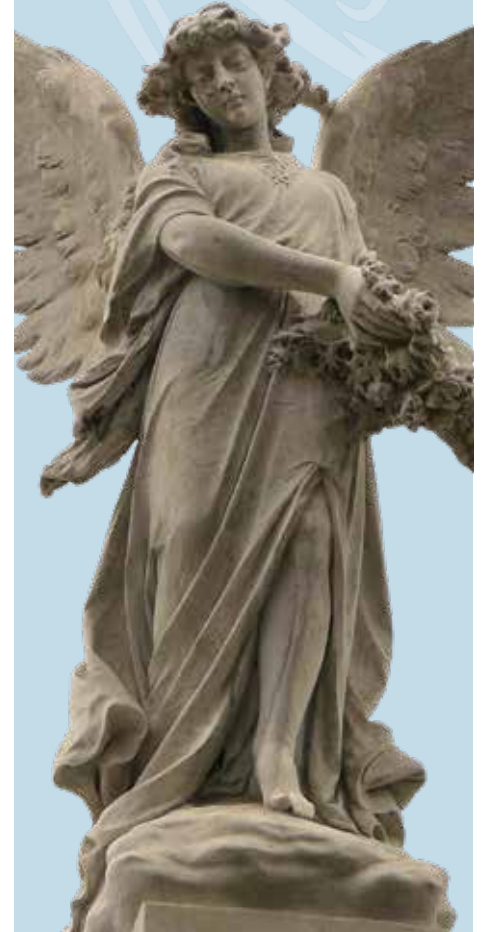
## Church Closing Policy

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](http://www.westminster-church.org), [wroc.westminster-church.org](http://wroc.westminster-church.org), [pittsburgh.cbslocal.com](http://pittsburgh.cbslocal.com), [www.wtae.com](http://www.wtae.com), and [www.wpxi.com](http://www.wpxi.com).)





**WESTMINSTER**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2040 Washington Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15241  
[www.westminster-church.org](http://www.westminster-church.org)  
*A PC(USA) Congregation*

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[www.youtube.com/user/WestminsterUSC](http://www.youtube.com/user/WestminsterUSC)



“I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them;  
I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give  
them a heart of flesh.”

– Ezekiel 11:19