



THE SPARE

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Pittsburgh, PA

On Being Connected

There's a great deal of talk about social media these days, and media in general. Some who study such things say that 44% of people now get most of their news from Facebook. If that's true, it has lots of implications.

First, it means that much of what people hear about the world depends on what they "like." Facebook's algorithms send people more of what they already prefer, which may just reinforce all their biases. Second, much of the "news" now comes with personalities and relationships attached. People discover that Facebook friends like or dislike something controversial, and that can lead to heated exchanges online, with all sorts of stories emerging about families and friendships being strained in the process.

When it comes to discussing important things online, the media are paradoxically social and antisocial at the same time. They're called "social media" because they connect lots of people at once, but they lack a key element of ordinary social interaction: the face-to-face encounter that not only permits more nuanced communication but also allows for immediate feedback to clarify miscommunication. If a person sees shock or hurt or anger or incomprehension in the other, she can respond to those signals and adjust what she says or how she says it, by way of attending to the relationship. That's much



harder to do online, which is one reason that social media can have a profoundly antisocial quality.

Conversations are challenging enough online when the participants all know each other; they're vastly more difficult and potentially dangerous when at least some of the parties are anonymous. Being connected personally through face-to-face conversation, or at least knowing each other well while communicating at a distance, has a way of moderating not only what people say but what they think and feel – again because they're more likely to take the whole person into account, and not just some position they favor or oppose. Anonymity kills accountability, which is why people are simultaneously bolder about what they say and more cowardly for not owning it publicly. All of this feeds the incivility of our discourse that almost everyone recognizes today.

Social media have their virtues, of course, but deep connectedness is not always among them. When people keep up with loved ones far away, or support groups lift each other up at a distance, or images and events can be shared more fully even with those who live around the corner, then connections are surely deepened and strengthened. But as the principal source of news and information, or as a substitute for real personal encounter, all these media are sorely limited.

In Advent we talk about the coming of Christ, who is Emmanuel, "God with us." There is no deeper connection, no firmer foundation of love and friendship and security, than what we find in the God who made us and loves us and is always as near as the air we breathe. In Christ we really are connected with God and one another.

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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.

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**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.*

**Christmas Eve
Services**

5:00 p.m.
*Family Service
in the Sanctuary*

7:00 p.m.
*Contemporary Service
in the WROC*

9:00 & 11:00 p.m.
*Lessons and Carols
in the Sanctuary*



Christmas Day

9:45 a.m. Bridge Contemporary Worship

11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship

New Year's Eve

6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Communion and Prayers in Galbreath Chapel

New Year's Day

9:45 a.m. Bridge Contemporary Worship

11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship

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Percussion
Concert**
*Sanctuary
7:30 p.m.*

**3
DEC** **Breakfast at
the Manger**

**9
DEC** **Gingerbread
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**11
DEC** **Pet
Remembrance
Service**
*WROC
2:00 p.m.*

Choir Concert
*Sanctuary
7:00 p.m.*

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DEC** **Christmas
Remembrance
Service**
*Galbreath Chapel
7:30 p.m.*

WESTMINSTER SEMINARS

Sundays at 9:45 a.m.
Galbreath Chapel

November 27; December 4, 11, 18

Designing Your Biblical Passport at Advent

Carnegie Samuel Calian, President Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of Theology, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

During the four Sundays of Advent, we welcome Dr. Sam Calian, who spoke at the installation of our pastor, Dr. Jim Gilchrist. Sam and his wife Doris are friends to many members of the Westminster community, and we are glad to have him back. Since his retirement from Pittsburgh Seminary in 2006, he has been a visiting scholar at Carnegie Mellon University's Tepper Graduate School of Business followed by six years as visiting professor of leadership and management ethics at the Katz Graduate School of Business at the University of Pittsburgh. He later served as the Protestant (ecumenical) chaplain for the Holland America Line. It was this latter position of traveling and seeing the world that propelled him to start writing what he hopes will be his 13th book, tentatively titled *Designing Your Biblical Passport for a Fuller Life*. Dr. Calian describes his presentations below:

November 27

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, Americans travel at home and abroad. Advent for many of us is a period of anticipation to see family and friends and have fun seeing places. Mary and Joseph traveled as they anticipated the birth of Jesus, seeking a safe haven from Herod the king who had heard rumors of an anticipated messiah. Many Jews were also migrating at this time due to their own fears of political unrest. Advent is indeed a time of anticipation with both fear and joy in the air. The Presbyterian Planning Calendar has chosen the following verses of scripture for the first Sunday of Advent: Isaiah 2:1-5, Psalm 122, Romans 13:11-14, Matthew 24:36-44. It is within this context of constant traveling and anticipation that I have been reflecting on the idea of designing a biblical passport for a lifetime of journeys that could fulfill our Creator's wishes for us, created as we all are in God's image – the *imago Dei* (Genesis 1: 26-27).

December 4

Will using a biblical passport help us experience a fuller life? I envision that a biblical passport can improve relationships among persons of all ages and cultural backgrounds. The sacred texts from many traditions are rich with examples and lessons of wisdom and hope for everyone. Ecumenical conversations among a wide range of Christians, as well as believers of other faiths with their own sacred texts, have lessons for each of us to learn. One of our major tasks today is to have deeper and more meaningful conversations to build trust with one another. And one of the better ways to do that is to use the building blocks of trust from our sacred texts. Advent is a timely period to connect God's grace and the realities of displacement in today's world as we consider the need for anchors in our lives, seek wisdom for entry into strange places, and look for a biblical passport as a welcoming sign that the *imago Dei* is present in our midst. Our discussion will focus on the ground work necessary from the Psalms and Proverbs, preparing us to think creatively in designing our biblical passports for new encounters wherever we find ourselves in the new year. Will our thoughts and actions promote understanding and hope in our conflicted world seeking to be a global society at peace?

December 11

Believers of every faith face a basic question: How literate are we regarding the sacred scripture of our tradition? The use and misuse of our respective religions can be traced unfortunately to the levels of ignorance communicated to believers about the content and spirit of their sacred texts. I suspect every faith tradition has its work to do in honoring faithfully the goodwill of their tradition. The politics of one's faith at any given time in history has more than one agenda. This is why the history of one's faith tradition needs to be interpreted and taught with integrity. Our discussion time will focus on Christians. Is there illiteracy about the Bible among believers? Does regular going to church make a difference? I will share a Bible quiz, used recently among college students, and the results, as well as a new quiz that grew from conversations with a former student at Pittsburgh Seminary based on his pastoral experiences. I think this will be an interesting discussion.

December 18

We are fast becoming an interfaith global society. This can be another contributing factor that needs to be considered in developing one's biblical passport to a fuller life in a changing world. I hope our seminar group will bring their first drafts of a personal biblical passport for discussion and suggestions. I plan to share my biblical passport as a sample that will undergo further change as our relationships mature in a global society seeking divine peace and justice in the spirit of the *imago Dei*. Thus we will attempt to fulfill God's will on earth as it is in heaven, upholding the Lord's Prayer as Jesus taught in his own life and ministry (Matthew 6:9-15). Hopefully, our biblical passports will serve its role in our conversations with others on the road to eternity guided by God's Spirit of forgiving love (1 Corinthians 13).

DIARY OF A LUNATIC

Present

A few weekends ago, our high school students once again played one of our favorite games. It's called Catacombs, and it is essentially a game of hide and seek in the church building, in the dark, all night long.* I view myself as having two main jobs during this all-night affair: 1) Keep the students safe, and 2) scare the living junk out of those same students. I love hiding around dark corners, waiting until I hear a group coming toward me, and jumping out right in front of them while screaming at the top of my lungs. It's just one of the perks of the job I suppose, that I get to have so much fun.

But a few nights after Catacombs was over, I was once again in the church late at night and was walking through a dark hallway. I found myself slowing down, trying to let my eyes adjust to the darkness, because I was certain I was being watched. I don't know how to explain it, other than perhaps being at the church that long after the sun had gone down leads to temporary insanity.** Maybe I was just so accustomed to students doing their level best to scare me back in the dark that I was just being cautious. But it sure felt like someone was there, even when I was completely alone.

Or was I? One of the principal messages we celebrate at Christmastime is a savior who doesn't look down on us from above, but who emptied himself to join us, to take up residence in human form, or as Eugene Peterson puts it, "He put on flesh and blood and moved in to the neighborhood." And even after his resurrection and ascension, we affirm that Christ is still with

us. He told us as much in Matthew 28, that he would be with us until the end of the age. So someone is with us in those dark hallways. Someone is with us in the quiet stillness. Someone is occupying that seat next to us in the horrible Pittsburgh traffic. Someone knows what it is to celebrate joy, and that same someone knows all too well how much we suffer. Someone is indeed watching us.

Are we aware of him?

I think that Christmas is all about a God who tells us that our humanity matters. This life matters.

We are not here using this life as a waiting room for a better promised future. We'll have that, to be sure. But Christ stepped into humanity to show us how much God values human life. And Christ continues to act in human affairs because he still values who we are and what we do. He's rarely brash about it. It's subtle. It's way too easy to miss if we are distracted, if we are caught up in our own desires or wants. And the thing that's really ironic is that if we're honest, the Christmas season can be one of the most distracting times in our lives. It's so easy to get caught up in the day to day busy-ness of this season that we neglect to see Christ moving in and through us, our friends, our families.

When I was scared in that hallway, I stopped for a few seconds in silence to let my eyes adjust to the world around me. Eventually clarity came, and I moved forward. I think we as followers of Christ will come across seasons where we need to let our eyes adjust. We will have times in our lives when we need to sit still for a bit, relax, and tune our lives to Christ's action in the world. Christmas is a super great time to do that, if we're willing. So this Christmas season, focus your eyes. Where is Christ moving in your life? Where are the places you're surprised to see him acting? Where are the places he's calling you to participate in kingdom building with him? Who are the people he's encouraging you to spend more time with this season? How is he showing you that this life matters?

And would you mind volunteering for Catacombs next year? These hallways can get kind of spooky alone!

*Actually, there is a pretty profound Christian message that goes along with Catacombs, but it's really hard to explain in a short *Spire* article. Swing by my office sometime if you're curious. I'll fill you in!

**Then again, look at what we've titled my column in the *Spire*. Maybe the insanity isn't all that temporary.

– Jason Freyer

BETWEEN HERE AND THERE

Today has been a busy day. It started with a conversation in a group of adults who recognized the need to care for themselves in order to properly care for others. We talked about the stresses that weigh on us, and the stresses that weigh on teenagers. It is so often the case that our desire is to shoulder our students' stresses too, and we end up being bogged down – unable to care for ourselves, let alone anyone else. If our life and faith aren't vibrant and vital, then how can we expect to disciple and guide anyone else?



Next, a small group of leaders and students from our church gathered to talk about what it means to find our identity in Christ. It's so easy to look at other people, or look in the mirror at who we are, and to make snap judgments: not pretty, not smart, stuck up, not good enough. But what does Jesus see when he looks at us? One student raised this point: if God made us – flaws and all – can we really call them flaws? Think about that for a moment. God created you and loves every part of you. When he looks at you he doesn't think the same things we do. He sees a beloved and amazing child. It's not an easy concept to grasp, but our teens are getting it!

Not long after those conversations I helped to build a ten-foot castle wall, got dressed in a faux fur cape, and lay face down in a giant mud puddle. I caught hot dogs in my mouth, used a plastic knife to cut someone out of duct tape, and drank more hot chocolate than I think I was supposed to.

You know what's most striking about all of this? It's kind of a normal day for me.

It can be hard to nail down what a "normal" day looks like for me. And I think that's part of why I love what I do here at Westminster. I know what my days will look like as far as what my calendar tells me, but I can never quite predict what question a student will ask me next. I can never quite nail down what kind of conversation I'm going to end up in when I sit down to talk with someone. I guess there is one thing that I should be used to by now, but I hope it never grows old: the students and members of this community have amazing insight into what it means to be children of God.

I'm not sure if you've ever had a chance to be a part of serious conversation about life or faith – it's sometimes a hard conversation to start.

But if you have the chance to dive into what it means to be a follower of Jesus, and how that affects your life each and every day, start that conversation. You'll be amazed at what God is doing in the lives of people in this community.

I'm amazed by it almost every day – and today is no different. Burdens, identity, castle walls, and the love of Christ. Yep, sounds like a pretty normal day to me.

We're lucky to be a part of a community like Westminster that knows there is value in rolling in the mud. We're lucky to be a part of a community like Westminster that knows that our identity and eternity both rest firmly in the hands of our risen Savior, Jesus Christ. If you're interested in any of the above, let me know. I'd love to talk about it with you.

– Ed Sutter

GLIMPSE OF MY WORLD

When Jesus used these images to describe his relationship with his followers, it's likely that his listeners were pretty familiar with sheep and their habits:

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.
(John 10:27-28, NIV)

For us today, living in the South Hills of Pittsburgh, that's a lot less likely. We probably have to do some research to know much about the characteristics and habits of sheep. So when these verses were the focus of a lesson with our fifth and sixth graders recently, I started reading. Here's some of what I learned:

One of the strongest instincts that sheep possess is called "flocking," the tendency to gather together in a herd. From the time they are tiny lambs, sheep learn to stick together, to follow the crowd. It's the safest thing to do if you are sheep. Flocking protects sheep from predators; there's safety in numbers. But it also can lead to trouble: if one sheep takes it into its head to do something crazy (like walk off a cliff, or wander into the road), guess what? The whole flock is likely to be going along too.

So, it turns out that sheep need a leader – someone who's smarter than they are. Someone who knows where the dangers are that should be avoided, like hungry wolves, cliffs, major highways, and dark valleys. Someone who knows where the good stuff in life is, too, like green pastures full of yummy grass to eat and cool, quiet waters.

In the lesson, the JAM kids were challenged to think about how Jesus might have shared these ideas today. What images from our daily experiences might he have used to describe the kind of relationship he offers?

After a lot of discussion, and suggestions that included friends, pets, political figures, teachers, and coaches, I think the image of a family was the most meaningful to these kids. Perhaps that's not really surprising, given their young age. But listening to them talk about the safety and protection, the guidance and support that they feel from their parents, grandparents, older siblings, and sometimes even younger siblings was really amazing. And then, one student shared this observation:

"Sure, families are pretty awesome. And they love you and all that. And parents know a lot, that's true. But if your family doesn't have God to lead you, and Jesus to walk alongside, then you're probably gonna get lost – just like those sheep. And then Jesus will have to come get you and bring you back. Again. Maybe it would just be easier to listen to him in the first place."

Turns out, we're a lot like sheep, aren't we? Following the crowd and not always so smart. Running amok because we've forgotten to listen for the shepherd's voice. And sometimes, we're called back to him by the lambs among us.

– Robin Pyles



Turns out, we're a lot like sheep
aren't we? Running amok
because we've forgotten to
listen for the shepherd's voice.

Bibles in October

Sunday, October 9, was a very special Sunday for our second and third graders. We were pleased to present these students with their very own Bibles – *The New Adventure Bible*. This Bible is not only practical but filled with fun and interesting facts. Within each book of the Bible, the children will find historical data about the times and the customs of the people. The Bible passages are written especially for today's children.

Congratulations to the 39 children who received their Bibles!



The New Adventure Bible is not only practical but filled with fun and interesting facts.





Imagination Rekindled

How is your imagination? Think about that for a moment. Merriam-Webster's online dictionary says that imagination is "the act or power of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or never before wholly perceived in reality." In one scene in the original *Miracle on 34th Street*, Kris Kringle is teaching skeptical little Susan about the importance of playing and says, "Susan, now you've heard of the French nation and the British nation. Well, this is the imagi-nation." We grownups too often seem to have imagination taught out of us. We lose the sense of wonder that allowed us as children to believe the unbelievable...to form images of worlds and events unseen and unexperienced but quite possibly real nonetheless.

Isaiah speaks words that invite us to recapture the wonder and imagination of a new day of promise offered by our loving God: "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6, NRSV). We've heard and perhaps sung those words so often that we may have forgotten just how incredible their claim is.

Isaiah was speaking to a people who had been forcefully removed from their homeland and taken to exile and slavery in distant Babylon. Loved ones were killed and their homes pillaged in the process. They were frightened, angry, disillusioned, and feeling abandoned by a God whom they had always been taught would care for them. And along comes Isaiah who says, "For unto us a child is born..." Handel's *Messiah* didn't swell in the background as Isaiah spoke, nor did the people do an about-face in their attitudes. It took time for this to occur. I expect that Isaiah knew that it would take time. Isaiah's words were as much a gentle

reminder of God's constant care as anything else, a reminder that could rekindle dormant imaginations. Hearing Isaiah, and reflecting on his words over time, enabled them to be able to slowly form a mental image of something not present – to imagine the new day and the salvation that God is promising through Isaiah.

Isaiah is also speaking to us today. Sometimes it is just as difficult to hear his words with a sense of hope and courage. Look at the news. Look to your lives. We, too, are often frightened and angry and disillusioned and perhaps feeling abandoned by God a bit. Wars rage. Children go to bed hungry. Loved ones die. Greed seems too often to trump the needs of people. And then we read Isaiah again: "For unto us a child is born..." Isaiah doesn't expect immediate, turn-on-a-dime, changes in our attitudes any more than he did in ancient times. Isaiah does, however, invite us to renew our imagination: to recapture images in our minds of a God who loves and cares for us through all time – even when we don't always readily see evidence of that. He invites us to a childlike wonder and imagination that cherishes the promise of his words even though they aren't yet fully a reality for us.

That, fundamentally, is what Advent and Christmas are about: hope in the face of challenging times. Pull out your Bible today and read Isaiah 9. Let your imaginations be rekindled. "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Hearing those words, imagine a new day and cherish its promise.

– Dave Fetterman



Christmas Remembrance

A Service of Comfort and Hope

Wednesday, December 21

7:30 p.m.

Galbreath Chapel

The Advent-Christmas time is a beautiful time of celebration. It can also be a time when feelings of loss and grief are profound. You are invited to join with others who have lost loved ones at a special service of Christmas Remembrance. The service will be a time to remember your loved ones, to acknowledge your grief, and to be reminded again of the comfort and hope that the newborn Christ brings to us all, especially those who are hurting. Join us for this special time of remembrance, of comfort, and of hope. For more information, contact Dave Fetterman, dfetterman@westminster-church.org or 412-835-6630.

WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Music
& Arts Series



Mt. Lebanon Percussion

Saturday, December 3
7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Led by director Richard Minnotte, Mt. Lebanon Percussion has become recognized as one of the premier public school percussion programs in the United States. WQED-FM calls Mt. Lebanon Percussion “a success beyond belief.” Everyone is sure to enjoy this lively program of holiday music.



Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 11
7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

The annual Christmas concert presents sounds of the season, with performances by the Upper St. Clair High School Chanteclairs, the Westminster Ringers, the Cherub and Junior Choirs, and the Chancel Choir singing Benjamin Britten’s *A Ceremony of Carols*. We are thrilled to welcome Gretchen Van Hoesen, harpist, who will accompany the Chancel Choir. Gretchen is the principal harpist of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

Both concerts are free and will appeal to all ages. A freewill offering will be gratefully accepted to support future programming.

WROC TALK – A Free Speaker Series

Presents

Tame Your Sugar Monster

You know it's bad...but how bad? Is all sugar off the table? Join Kathy Parry – Your Real Food Coach – as she reveals the dangers and addictive nature of sugar and how your habit may be aging you! But Kathy will also let you know how much sugar is okay and the top 12 ways to kick your sugar habit. Join Kathy for an enlightening talk in a no-judgment zone, and help tame your sugar monster.

Tuesday, January 10, 2017

7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Fellowship Hall

Instructor: Kathy Gillen Parry

Free: Registration required

Kathy Parry is a speaker, author, and energy expert who helps exhausted and burned-out people become more energized, productive, and fulfilled. She helps others understand what real, whole foods are and how they affect health and vitality. With degrees in Business and Food Management and a Certification in Plant Based Nutrition from the T.Colin Campbell Program at eCornell University, Kathy encourages others to live their most energetic lives. www.KathyParry.com

tame your
SUGAR
MONSTER



Merry Christmas!



WROC Gift Certificates Make Great Stocking Stuffers!

Give the gift of fitness to a child or adult in your life. Visit our website for a complete listing of our Winter 2017 Programs.

What the Deacons Do

Treasures for Troops

We are all very excited about a new deacon project that will begin in January: *Treasures for Troops*. Two times a year, we'll be collecting small personal items for our troops, who are being deployed to various places in the Middle East. Items such as shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and Chapstick are in great need. One special requirement for liquids is that **nothing can be more than eight ounces**, and travel-size products would be perfect! Special treats include granola bars, small boxes of raisins, and decks of cards. Starting next month, we'll be gathering these "treasures" before and after all services in the north entry and by the Bridge. Look for our camouflage boxes and a salute of thanks from our own Dick Hestwood, dressed in full military fatigues. We would also be happy to accept checks to help with the postage. You may make checks payable to Westminster Presbyterian Church with "Treasures for Troops" in the memo box. Thank you in advance for helping us to make *Treasures for Troops* another Westminster success.

Look to each other's interest and not merely your own.

Philippians 2:4

– Andrée Jeffrey

PET Remembrance

Pet Remembrance Service
Sunday, December 11
2:00 p.m. in the WROC

It's common to have a memorial service to celebrate the life of a loved one who has died. In fact, we do it all the time because these gatherings allow us to grieve the death of our beloved and also provide an opportunity to start coping with the loss and start moving toward healing. So why wouldn't we do the same for our beloved pets? After all, our animal companions have given us years of joy and are often regarded as members of the family. And when we lose them, the grief we experience can be as powerful as it is with the loss of any family member.

These are some of the reasons we're having a Pet Remembrance Service. We'll share memories, we'll laugh, we'll cry; but most important, we'll acknowledge the loss and pay tribute to these cherished members of our families. So if you – or someone you know – has recently lost a pet, please join us on Sunday, December 11, at 2:00 p.m. in the WROC. All family members, including pets that are still with you, are invited and encouraged to come.



Westminster at 70

An Informal and Personal History of the Chancel Choir of Westminster

Last Sunday, as I was listening to the beautiful rendition of “Lord, Listen to Your Children” sung by the choir, I felt such love and pride for that group to which I had belonged for 48 years.

As we celebrate our history this year, I felt I had earned the right to tell my perspective on how the music program, especially the choir, has developed over the years.

When the early services, led by John Galbreath, were held in the schoolhouse down by the old log cabin, Joan Smith was the first choir director. Joan was a high school student who volunteered to play the piano and direct the very small choir.

to play on the actual organs that Bach and his contemporaries had played to create the great music of the church. Jim was a strict classicist and the choir sang only that type of music. He gave wonderful seminars in which we sat around the organ and he played examples of each of the concepts he taught us. As he was only a part-time employee, Jim did not work with the youth choirs at all. They were all handled by volunteers who did a fine job.

I joined the choir at that time as did many others drawn to Jim’s fine musicianship. However, I must say that the church was not air conditioned at that time and we wore robes that were rather torturous in the summer. The robes were made of a heavy gold cloth with a high neck and tight sleeves. Over that we wore a white cotton surplice as the children do today. I must say, they looked really elegant!



Choir sings at church ground-breaking August 1, 1948

When we moved to our church that is now the administration wing, Henrietta Locklin became the choir director. Henrietta was an organist, but I do not know if she played an organ or a piano at the time. I do know that she had a musical family and that her husband and children, Bob and Margaret, all sang in that devoted group.

After Mrs. Locklin left, we hired a talented organist, Dr. James Hunter, from Duquesne University to play and direct the choir. Jim was a superb organist and he spent his summers going to Europe

John Galbreath decided he wanted to expand the music program by having a full-time director of music with a less formal approach. Walt Horsley arrived with lots of energy and new ideas. Walt was a composer who wrote *One Hundred Percent of Rain*, a cantata that the children and parents all loved. This music was performed successfully all over the United States and we were all very proud of Walt. Walt helped to grow enthusiasm for participation in youth choirs by taking the kids on camping and canoeing trips. The adult choir grew in size, but the old electronic organ became clunkier and clunkier.

When Walt retired, Dave Hilty had already started a small fund for the building of a pipe organ. As

chairman of the search committee for a new music director, I found that no organist worth his salt would accept a job playing on that old organ. Fortunately for us, Joe Hardy and his wife generously donated a new pipe organ to the church.

Our search committee found our new organist and director, Bill Evans, in Denver. One of Bill’s claims to fame was that he played for the funeral of John F. Kennedy in Washington when Bill was only 16. Not only a fine musician, Bill was also a professional installer of organs. Installing an organ is a very complicated procedure and Bill enthusiastically worked with the organ maker to



Chancel Choir, 2009

install each small and large part of the organ to his specifications. This was a real thrill for Bill and he called the organ “my baby.” Our organ today is known as one of the finest in the city.

With the new organ in place, Bill was able to expand the repertoire of the choir to include several large masterpiece works a year. His connections with the symphony led him to find professional musicians to accompany our concerts. It was an extraordinary experience to participate in these programs. The music of the church served as an outreach to people who wanted to attend a church with music that would fulfill them spiritually.

Around this time Walter Knopf, a fine tenor in our choir, gave funds to hire a professional quartet to aid in teaching and to perform at the early service. These folks not only improve the quality of the music, but are important members of the choir family.

Doug Brown was our next director. Doug was a fine musician and scholar, but he and his wife felt a strong need to live near family and so he left for a church in the South.

Lo and behold – waiting in the wings with our youth choir was our own Chris Hestwood, a person of great talent and musical ability. Many of us had prayed for her to become our new director. Chris has brought musical excellence to the choir, an expansion of the types of music that are sung, successful challenges to the abilities of the singers, and expansion of our music program into the surrounding communities. Somehow these accomplishments all pale beside the love, humor, fun, and caring she brings to each rehearsal. She has been a leader in creating a caring fellowship in the choir – not just a group of people who practice Thursday nights and sing on Sunday.

One of the best things Chris brought to the choir was Jim Burns, our organist. His talents are amazing – at rehearsals he can play anything at first sight. Jim is a quiet and humble man who happily shares a great talent with us. His organ solos speak for themselves.

Not many people realize how fortunate we are to have two amazing and talented musicians to support Music & Arts at Westminster. Lorraine Milovac fills in nobly whenever Chris is away. She also directs the Upper St. Clair High School choruses and several other choruses throughout the city. Our own Dr. Sara Kyle assists Jim Burns. Playing the organ when Jim is away is just one of many ways in which Sara contributes her time and talents to our church.

I have only remarked on the choir directors, but it is the loyal devoted and talented singers who make the fine music happen. They practice for two hours every Thursday night and only a rare blizzard cancels rehearsal. Chris sets high standards and the choir works hard to meet them – often taking music home to practice their parts. Christmas has always been the highlight of the year and the Christmas music has become one of the great, cherished traditions of Westminster.

I have to end with a pitch to you to join the choir. You will find a rich spiritual experience for yourself, and a group that will accept you with graciousness and warmth. You will never regret it.

– Susan Redfield



WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THIS FAR BY GRACE *70* years FORWARD IN FAITH

Year-End Contributions Recording and Reporting

In order for your charitable contributions to be tax-deductible in 2016, they must be received in the church or postmarked by December 31, 2016. Any contributions received in the church during January 2017 (other than those that are mailed, dated, and postmarked by December 31, 2016) will be deductible only on your 2017 tax return.

Also, to ensure the deductibility of your church contributions, please do not file your 2016 income tax return until you have received a written acknowledgment of your contributions from the church. Some of your contributions may not be tax-deductible if you file your tax return before receiving a written acknowledgment of your contributions from the church. The 2016 contribution statements will be mailed to you on or around January 13, 2017.

If you have any questions regarding year-end contributions, please contact David Reiter, church business administrator, at 412-835-6630x201.

Donations of Appreciated Assets

Contributors to Westminster Presbyterian Church may give appreciated assets to the church (such as stocks or mutual funds) without being required to pay tax on the capital gains. This can be accomplished either by delivering certificates to the church or by electronic transfer of these assets to Westminster Presbyterian Church as payment on your pledge. Please note that these gifts must be long-term investments. Short-term capital gains do not qualify for the tax benefits.

The procedure for each of these types of donations is quite simple.

CERTIFICATE DONATION

- Present the certificates to Dave Reiter, church business administrator, at the church office.
- The owner(s) must sign and date the certificates. If all of the shares of the certificate are being donated to Westminster Presbyterian Church, the owner(s) must sign a form letter to confirm the donation to Westminster Presbyterian Church.
- If a fraction of the total shares of the certificate is being donated to Westminster Presbyterian Church, the owner(s) must sign a form letter to confirm the donation to Westminster Presbyterian Church and a request for reissue of the remaining fraction of certificate shares.
- An acknowledgement of the receipt of the stock shares will be given or sent to the donor(s), followed by a confirmation letter of the sale, per share average price for the date of the gift, and total value of the donation.

ELECTRONIC TRANSFER

- Notify your broker that you wish to donate shares to Westminster Presbyterian Church through ***Morgan Stanley Smith Barney***.
- The transfer should go to:
DTC 0015
Account no. 827-105717-515
- It is important that you or your broker contact Dave Reiter at the church office, 412-835-6630x201, informing us that a transfer is being made. This will ensure that proper credit is given to you on your church giving statement.
- A letter of confirmation of the sale will be sent to the donor(s). This letter will state the date of sale, per share average price for the date of the gift, and total value of the donation.

If you have further questions, please call Dave Reiter at 412-835-6630x201.

Financial Report *As of October 31, 2016*



Christmas Joy Offering

Presbyterians have long celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ by giving generously to a Christmas season offering. The 2016 Christmas Joy Offering at Westminster supports two programs. Your gift to the Christmas Joy Offering helps provide financial assistance to current and former church workers and their families and also enables deserving students to attend Presbyterian-related racial ethnic colleges and schools.

Envelopes for the 2016 Christmas Joy Offering will be in the pews beginning December 18, and are also contained within your 2016 Offering Envelope boxes.



General Fund Contributions	
Year-to-Date Actual 2016	\$1,600,282.71
Annual Budget	\$1,986,000.00
Amount needed to fulfill budget	\$385,717.29

Year-to-Date Income Statement	
Income	\$1,871,741.74
Expenses	\$1,860,087.62
Net Position	\$11,654.12

We thank you for your wonderful support through the first ten months, and we are pleased to report that we have not had to rely on any outside lending sources to fulfill our internal and external commitments. However, as you can see above, we still have approximately 19.4% of our 2016 budgeted contributions yet to be fulfilled.

If you are current or ahead on your 2016 pledge, thank you for your continuing support. If you are behind on your 2016 pledge, please consider catching up and fulfilling your pledge, so that we can continue to meet our commitments. Thank you.

2017 Stewardship Campaign Update *As of November 21, 2016*

	2017	2016
Number of pledges received	322	481
Amount pledged	\$1,250,078	\$1,676,139

The 2017 Stewardship campaign is underway, and we thank you for your pledge for 2017. We have received pledges for 2017 from about 63% of those who pledged for 2016. If you have yet to make your 2017 pledge, you may do so by placing it in the offering plate today, or by mailing it to the Finance Office at the church, or by going online at www.westminster-church.org/give. The 2017 Stewardship campaign pledge cards are available in the pew racks and in the brochure racks around the church. Thank you.



Carol Gates

November 3

Dorothy Junker

November 15

Update from the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee

The APNC has met weekly to work through the steps necessary to select a new associate pastor for Westminster. Ayana Teeter of Pittsburgh Presbytery met with the committee to explain the process and provide the resource materials to accomplish this task.

To date, the committee has completed the necessary paperwork and submitted it to Session for approval.

In the near future, representatives from the APNC will be providing updates at each of the worship services to keep the congregation informed. Articles in the bulletin and *Spire* will be forthcoming as we continue the search for our new associate pastor.

Session Update

On November 21, Session approved the Ministry Information Form presented by the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee, so that it can be endorsed by Presbytery and posted online soon for prospective candidates to consider. Session also approved a contract to hire Jason Freyer as a temporary pastor, subject to Presbytery's concurrence and his ordination, tentatively scheduled for Sunday, January 8, at 3:00 p.m. in the WROC.

Plans for improving the upkeep up the building were discussed, including creation of a new part-time position for a property manager to oversee routine cleaning and maintenance.

Because Christmas and New Year's Day occur on Sunday this year, Session concurred with the Worship Commission's recommendation to have just the 9:45 and 11:00 a.m. services on those days, and resume the 8:30 service on January 8.

Church Closing Policy

When the Upper St. Clair School District is closed due to weather conditions, the church offices will be closed and all activities and meetings scheduled for that day are canceled. When the school district is on a two-hour delay, the church offices will be open during normal business hours and all activities and meetings scheduled for the day will take place at their scheduled times. Church closing information is broadcast on television (KDKA, WTAE, and WPXI), radio (KDKA-AM 1020), and the church's website.



Christmas Poinsettias

The Chancel Guild is accepting memorial or honoree contributions for poinsettias. The beautiful poinsettias throughout Westminster during the Christmas season are the result of generous contributions by our members and friends. Use the form below and make your check payable to the Chancel Guild. Mail the form and your check to Peg Kinsey at the church office or place it in the collection plate. Contributions must be received no later than **Monday, December 19**, so your gift can be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

No poinsettias will be disbursed on Christmas Eve. Please indicate if you plan to pick up your flower or whether you would like it delivered to a shut-in.



Christmas Memorial and Honoree Poinsettia Order Form

Memorial Honoree

Name of Memorial/Honoree (PLEASE PRINT)

Deliver poinsettia to shut-in Will pick up poinsettia on Tuesday, December 27, or Wednesday, December 28, or Thursday, December 29 (9 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.) **NOTE: The church is closed on Monday, December 26.**

My Name _____

Please return this form to Peg Kinsey in the church office by Monday, December 19.





**WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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*Ah! dearest Jesus, Holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for Thee.*

*My heart for very joy doth leap,
My lips no more can silence keep;
I too must raise with joyful tongue
That sweetest ancient cradle-song.*

*Glory to God in highest heaven,
Who unto man His Son hath given!
While angels sing with pious mirth
A glad New Year to all the earth.*

*Martin Luther, 1539
Translation: Catherine Winkworth, 1865*

Merry Christmas