



THE SPARE

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Pittsburgh, PA

Faith at Work

Faith means different things to different people.

To some, it's a kind of optimism, as in "I have faith that things will all work out." Maybe there are good reasons for that optimism, based on a sense of the way things are. Or maybe it's more like a choice to see the glass half full, a preference for looking on the bright side when the facts don't point either way. Or maybe it's just a sunny disposition.

Other people think of faith as a set of beliefs. In Christian circles that often translates into a creed, like the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed. In confirmation class, and when candidates come up for ordination, individuals may write a "statement of faith," which is a short summary of what they believe. In that sense faith is like a cluster of convictions.

There is a third meaning of faith, which is a kind of trust. That's the meaning found most often in the Bible. To have faith in God is to trust God with your life, to live as though God is in charge and you can count on God, even when you have no idea what's coming next.

This last kind of faith is different from the other two. It goes beyond them. It's not like optimism, in that it doesn't necessarily think things will turn out the



way we want – at least not any time soon. Things may in fact get worse, but then faith as trust grows stronger, because that's when we need it the most.

And faith as trust is more than a set of beliefs, unless those beliefs find their way out of the head and into the heart. Beliefs can be just a set of opinions that don't make much difference, until we step out into some deep uncertainty and really have to rely on God. Then faith is like jumping out of an airplane and counting on your chute to open.

Faith of this last variety tends to be an active faith. It finds things to do because anyone who truly relies on God notices that there is much to be done. Hungry people need to be fed, physically and spiritually. Lonely people need someone

to care, and God has no arms but ours to reach out to them. People are afraid, and they need to see what faith looks like when things aren't going well – which is what we find in those who learned to trust in God when nothing else could sustain them.

"Faith without works is dead," says the New Testament letter of James. Not weak, or incomplete, but dead. Real faith sees that God is at work in the world and wants to be part of that work, because faith relies on God to set its course. That may be scary at first, but trust grows with practice when it finds one who is trustworthy. If faith without works is dead, a faith at work makes us fully alive.

See this and other articles on faith-related topics on Westminster's new blog at www.westminster-church.org.

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www.westminster-church.org.

Read the *Spire* online at:

www.westminster-church.org

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 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.*

Thanksgiving Eve Service

**Wednesday, November 25
7:30 p.m.
Sanctuary**

Giving thanks is an inherent part of worship, and the Thanksgiving Eve worship service enables us to be especially deliberate and purposeful in expressing our thanks to our Heavenly Father, who has provided us with such abundance in our lives.

In keeping with the tradition of giving thanks, for more than three decades Christ United Methodist Church and Westminster Presbyterian Church have participated in a joint Thanksgiving Eve service, which alternates yearly between the two churches. This year's service will be at Westminster on Wednesday evening.

The combined choirs of Christ United Methodist Church and Westminster will sing.

All are welcome to be a part of this joyous Thanksgiving service.

Upcoming Events

**01
NOV**

All Saints' Day

Stewardship Commitment Sunday

**07
NOV**

Chanticleer concert in the sanctuary

Saturday | 7:30 p.m.

**22
NOV**

Christ the King Sunday

**25
NOV**

Thanksgiving Eve Service

**29
NOV**

First Sunday of Advent

CHRISTIAN FORMATION SEMINARS

Sundays at 9:45 a.m. in Galbreath Chapel

November 1, 8, 15 & 22

Four Women of Faith: Contributions to Our History

Warren Archer, Sara Kyle, Bobbie Hartman, Millicent Smith

American women provided a foundational role in establishing American culture. In a time when most leaders were men, women leaders contributed significantly in various segments of American society. What motivated these women? How did their faith and their time in history affect their actions? This seminar series will look at four notable women in four different settings and reflect on what drove these women to provide such high quality leadership.

November 1

Government

Hannah Callowhill Penn (1671-1726) was the second wife of William Penn, founder of the colony of Pennsylvania. After her husband became incapacitated, Hannah took charge of overseeing Pennsylvania for six years before his death and then for another eight. Most famously, she settled the boundary disputes with Maryland and maintained good relations with Native Americans. Hannah was a Quaker.

November 8

Family

Elizabeth Clay Watkins (1750-1829) was the mother of statesman Henry Clay of Kentucky. Henry's father and Elizabeth's first husband, the Reverend John Clay, was a Baptist minister in Virginia. After he died, Elizabeth married Henry Watkins, and after some years they moved to the frontier of Kentucky and operated an inn. Over two marriages, Elizabeth gave birth to 16 children and was known as a good neighbor who was kind, responsive, and sympathetic to the needs of others.

November 15

Church

Henrietta "Nettie" Donaldson Grier (1869-1964), MD, served as a medical missionary to China. She was born in Greenville, Pennsylvania, and as a child decided to become a foreign missionary. She studied medicine in New York City at a time when the profession was almost exclusively for men. She excelled in both internal medicine and surgery. In 1893, she went to China and soon married Mark B. Grier, fellow missionary and a southern Presbyterian pastor. The couple worked together in rural China, 500 miles west of Shanghai.

November 22

Education

Helen Faison (1924-2015), PhD, was born in Pittsburgh and educated at the University of Pittsburgh. A trailblazing educator during her 55-year career, Helen became the first female and first African-American principal of a Pittsburgh high school (1968). In 1983, she became the deputy superintendent of the Pittsburgh Public Schools – the highest ranking woman in the district at the time. She also served as interim superintendent (1999-2000). Widely admired and respected as a skilled leader and influential educator, Faison was a member of Mt. Ararat Baptist Church in Pittsburgh.

The first three sessions will be led by Westminster elders who enjoy researching religious subjects in American history. A practicing attorney, Warren Archer has taught classes on a variety of historical topics, including the role of religion in Colonial America. Sara Kyle, PhD in musicology, specializes in the history of Protestant sacred music. Bobbie Hartman, PhD in chemistry, brings her knowledge of science to mission projects, especially in Haiti.

For the fourth session, we are delighted to welcome Millicent Smith, niece of Helen Faison, who will speak about the remarkable career of her late aunt.

Like Home



I am writing this article from the seminary, in my library carrel. This is an incredible thing for me, a home away from home if you will. Each student can sign up for a carrel, which is basically a tiny cubicle in the library to keep some books and some personal effects, and where you can study at the school. Because I spend the entire day on Monday and Wednesday at the school, I have made my carrel home. I picked up a few free posters of Superman at a local comic book shop, so he is looking over everything I do. I have all my quick reference theology books there so that I can work on my papers. And my personal favorite, what totally sets my carrel apart from everyone else's, is an electric hot water kettle and a pour over coffee pot. That's right. I can have coffee any time I want here in the library. That's just beautiful.

Essentially, what I tried to do is make a home for myself. I think I've done pretty well.

Home is a kind of tricky concept, isn't it? On the one hand, my house in Bethel Park is my home. I sleep there just about every night, I relax there every day, and I enjoy my family there. But when Sarah and I are driving back to Murrysville to visit with my family, I almost always say we're "going home" even though I've not lived in that house for over ten years. When I'm in the woods at Pine Springs Camp, I always have this sense of home, a place that is familiar and restorative. Apparently, when the situation demands it, I create little homes where I am likely to spend copious amounts of time.

Home is important. Jesus picks up on home a lot. "Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?" (John 14:1-2) This is a great image! Christ has gone ahead of us to prepare a home for us in God. In the end, when our life is over, we have a home to go to. Jesus has got it all set up for us.

The home we have waiting for us up there is meant to be established here and now.

But I have long believed that a Christianity that waits for heaven until the day we die is a shallow Christianity. Just because we have a home in Christ in the end doesn't mean that we can't

make a pretty decent home of this world while we're here. Jesus would agree. He taught us to pray "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." The home we have waiting for us up there is meant to be established here and now.

So what could we do in our world today to make it a bit more like home? Could we restore the humanity to someone who has lost it because they're on the fringes of society? Could we provide basic human needs to those who are unable to provide for themselves or their families? Could we be the love that shines brighter than the negativity of our civil discourse? What can we do in our neighborhoods, our families, our workplaces to make them feel a bit more like home?

I think when we look at this with the term "mission," we have a tendency to reduce our creativity. Mission gets flatly lumped into either spreading the Gospel or meeting some basic needs like medicine or whatever. Don't get me wrong, that's totally mission! But I wonder, if we started looking at it as making our fellow humans feel at home, would we get more creative? I mean, who thinks to bring a coffee maker to the library? When we're making a home for someone, our options are limitless.

So my friends, let's make our world a home.

— Jason Freyer

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

– Frederick Buechner



Last year in this same column I wrote about God’s call in our lives and some of the difficulties that we encounter in identifying exactly what that calling may be. It seems to be a topic that comes up in my work as a therapist with some

frequency. People (myself included) have a deep desire to better understand where God is leading them. Even those who may not use the same articulation of “God leading” in their lives seem to be seeking the same concepts: “Where is my life headed?” and “What should I be doing?”

It’s no wonder that people end up asking these questions in a therapist’s office – they’re not easy questions to answer! I love the way that Buechner subtly illuminates the difficulty in this endeavor. God calls us to the place where our “deep gladness” meets the world’s “deep need.” “Deep” seems to be the pivotal word here. Not only does it imply a certain foundational sense, as in the “depths of my soul,” but it also implies a certain hidden, buried, or unknown quality, as in “the depths of the ocean.” This of course can be an obstacle when it comes to defining both our deep gladness *and* the world’s deep need. Oftentimes, neither side is quite sure.

Our needs become buried in the worries of our lives: finances, relationships, successes, and failures. They can be lost in the pile of pressures we place on ourselves to earn more, get ahead, build a reputation. Our needs get confused with the long list of desires that each of us hold so near to our hearts.

Our deep gladness is put on the back burner in the name of hard work. It is forgotten after years of neglect as we wait for the schedule to open up. It gets left aside under the guise of humility and sacrifice. It is lost when we become people we never intended to become.

Are we left with no hope?

If no one knows their deep gladness and if deep needs have been lost and misidentified, how will the two ever meet? Must we wait for chance encounters when the two simply happen to intersect? We are in need of a guide.

Fortunately we have not only a guide, but a Creator who knew our needs and our joys long before we ever considered them. “...the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God” (Romans 8:26-27). When we set out to find something deep inside and are unsure where to begin the search, the Holy Spirit has already gone ahead of us. Jeremiah 3 tells us, “This is what the Lord says... ‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.’”

When we don’t know where to begin the search, when we have no words left to pray, Father, Son, and Spirit have gone ahead on our behalf. Though we seek to find our deep need and gladness buried somewhere in our own heart, perhaps we’d benefit far more by searching into the heart of God. It is in God’s heart alone that our deepest needs and joys can be satisfied, and it is to God’s heart that we are ultimately called.

What is your deep gladness, or your deep need? I’d love to hear about your search, and pray with you for God’s guidance along the way.

– Ed Sutter

GLIMPSE OF MY WORLD

On Sundays, I often have the opportunity to lead the Bible lesson for our youngest children, the two through four year olds. Recently one of the stories we shared was from the book of Judges: Gideon's defeat of the Midianite army. Following the curriculum's emphasis for the month, that God can help us be brave, the point for the children was supposed to be "because God knows everything, I can be brave."

But something happened on the way to the conclusion.

As I was setting the scene for the story, emphasizing that the Midianite army was huge and Gideon's army was tiny, I explained that Gideon passed out trumpets, jars, and torches to his men. As I opened my mouth to continue, one of the little boys said, "Wait – where are the guns?" "Yes," said one of the others, "you have to have weapons to fight a war." Even the three and four year olds know that you have to have the right tools to do the job. And trumpets and jars and torches are not a good way to fight a war, especially against an enemy with a much larger army than your own. No wonder Gideon was afraid – he wasn't very well prepared, and was surely set to lose the battle and probably his life. Poor Gideon.

Now, for these young children who are surrounded by bigger people who clearly know much more than they do themselves, it's easy to believe that God knows everything (that, in this case, perhaps the Midianite army held a secret fear of loud music?). Or, being surrounded by adults who can do so much more than they can, these children easily believe that God can do anything. No question.

So then, if God is so smart and can do anything, why doesn't God just show up with some better weapons? Wouldn't that have been a much smarter way to win a war?

Two ideas stood out to me as I thought about this story, and talked about it with these children:

- God often chooses the unexpected. He looks for ways to get our attention, and to make sure we know that sometimes (often) we can't do it ourselves. Gideon couldn't win a battle by blowing trumpets and shouting. But God could.
- God uses the tools at hand. Could God have provided an arsenal of all the usual weapons of war? Sure, but he didn't. He used what the Israelite army happened to have, what was already there at hand. And in God's hand, the available tools became the right tools to get the job done.

"Be still and know that I am God," says the psalmist in Psalm 46. "Stop running around thinking you can do it all and know it all yourself. Stop and pay attention. I am God (not you) and I've got this. Just trust me on this one."

That's what Gideon did. He knew he was outnumbered. He knew he had the wrong stuff. But he trusted that God was handling it all, that God was in charge. Which meant that Gideon didn't have to be.

That's my goal this month: trust God. Let him be in charge, even when it looks like I can do it myself. God's got a better plan (even if it looks crazy from my point of view). So, I'm going to try to let him run the show.

– Robin Pyles



Family Support & Discussion Group

1st and 4th Sundays of the Month

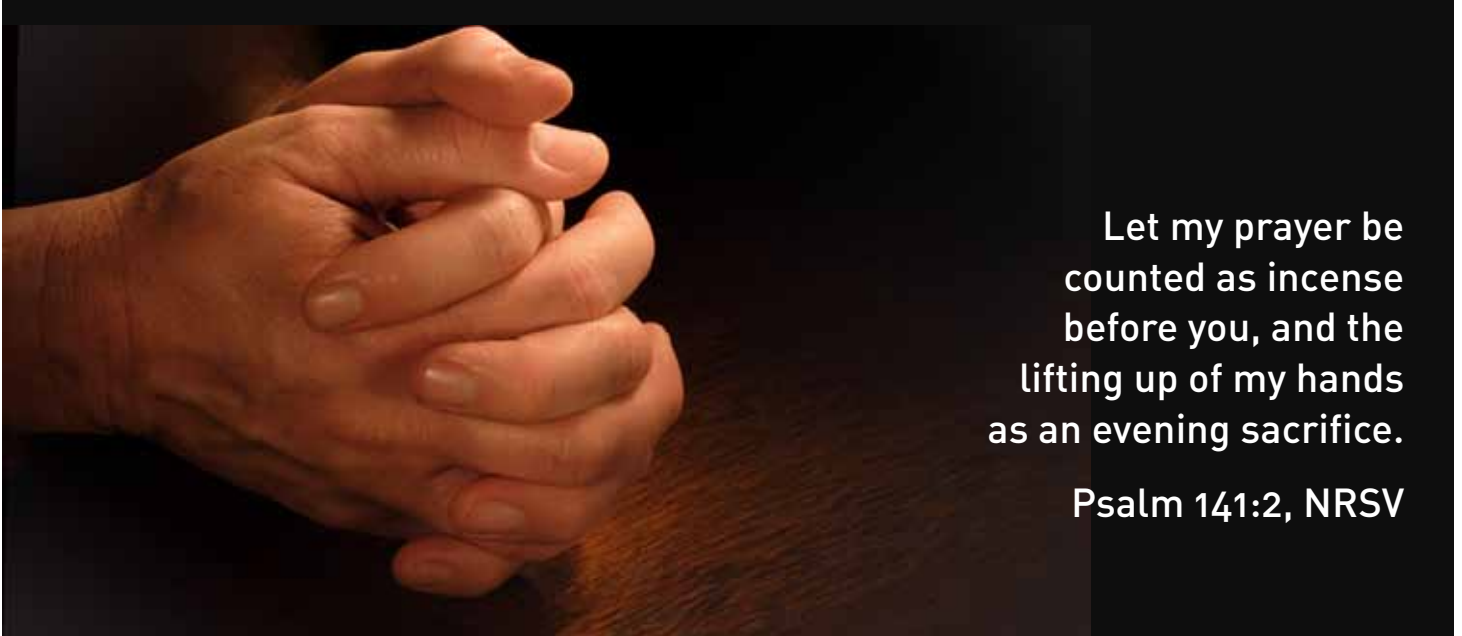
9:45 – 10:45 a.m.

Room 238

Are you raising children of any age? Do you have joys and concerns about raising children in today's world? Would you enjoy an opportunity to get to know other parents who are also walking the road of parenthood? Would you welcome a time to talk and laugh and pray together with other parents, apart from children?

If your answer is yes, you are encouraged to come to Westminster's Family Support & Discussion Group. Beginning on Sunday, November 1, at 9:45 a.m., we will meet in Room 238 for discussion, prayer, and laughter together. With your help we will identify topics of relevance to you for our discussion times. This is your group. We will build it together. Dave Fetterman, Robin Pyles, and Ed Sutter will share the facilitation of the group. What we need now is you. Join us on November 1.

Restless Hearts Transformed by Prayer



Let my prayer be
counted as incense
before you, and the
lifting up of my hands
as an evening sacrifice.

Psalm 141:2, NRSV

Consider something that Frederick Buechner wrote about prayer in *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC*:

We all pray whether we think of it as praying or not. The odd silence we fall into when something very beautiful is happening, or something very good or very bad. The ah-h-h-h! that sometimes floats up out of us as out of a Fourth of July crowd when the skyrocket bursts over the water. The stammer of pain at somebody else's pain. The stammer of joy at somebody else's joy. Whatever words or sounds we use for sighing with over our own lives. These are all prayers in their way.

Buechner reminds us that prayer isn't about saying the right words at the right time. Prayer isn't about eloquent language. Prayer is, instead, about our attitude toward God and our relationship with God. It is about trust, wonder, awe, compassion. Prayer can be the silence that occurs or "the ah-h-h-h!" that echoes forth when we are struck by the beauty and glory of God's creation or the gentle love shown in a newborn infant. Prayer can be the inarticulate mutterings

that issue forth when we are humbled and feeling inadequate in the face of someone's pain.

Prayer can be words, too, of course: words of hope, of aspiration, of thanksgiving, of intercession, of praise. Even then, especially then, we need to remind ourselves that prayer really isn't about the right words or the eloquent expression of them. Prayer isn't about expertise at grammar; it is about honest, from the heart, sharing with God of our deepest longing and hope and praise and gratitude and concern. Prayer is about connecting with God as with a dear friend.

Verbalized or not, prayer can transform us as it provides a central means of (a) fostering our relationship with God, (b) realizing God's never ending love and care, and (c) deepening our relationships with others as we lift their joys and concerns in prayer. This doesn't mean that God is a celestial genie who grants our wishes as we ask them. Sometimes, even after fervent prayer, a loved one dies or has a crisis that continues unabated. The relationship that we foster in prayer isn't about getting all that we want. Instead, that relationship is about

encountering God and God's love, and being transformed by the encounter as it assures us of a God who never leaves us even in the face of pain and need and death.

Augustine had it right, I think, when in his *Confessions* he wrote: "Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee."

Augustine knew that prayer is about relationship with a loving God. Prayer is about resting in that God's love regardless of whether our hearts are troubled or rejoicing. Prayer is about knowing that our hearts, though full of either joy or sorrow, are unsettled until we know God as a place of love, care, hope, and rest. The spiritual discipline of prayer provides the gateway that leads to this gracious God. Join me in prayer that doesn't care about what, if any, words are used, but that cares, instead, about finding a God in whom our restless hearts can find joy and hope and rest so that our lives may be transformed in the encounter.

Shalom.

– Dave Fetterman

Humanae

The August Wilson Center for African American Culture is covered with many faces these days, a 150 faces of many colors.

Humanae/ I AM AUGUST is an art installation by Brazilian photographer Angelica Dass. Each image is a square format, and the person is photographed straight on from the shoulders up against a backdrop that matches their skin tone to a Pantone® color. They are pictured without accessories: no eyeglasses, no jewelry. The portraits are placed one next to the other in a grid that resembles a Pantone Guide. They carry no personal identification: no name, no title, no reference to nationality or economic status. Underneath each photo is simply a Pantone® number. Dass says that she hopes the installation shows “our true colors, rather than the untrue red and yellow, black and white.”

Humanae/ I AM AUGUST is extremely rich in meaning, emotion, and irony. On the one hand, it challenges our general definitions of skin color: “What is white? What is black?” In the process of defining with more accurate precision our broad categories of skin color, Dass paradoxically ends up with an unlimited number of colors and shades. The artist believes that the project will always be a “work in progress” unless the whole human population is photographed and cataloged. In trying to define the general, we encounter the particular. We are all unique.

On the other hand, it challenges the semantics of black and white as opposites. The white/black duality is transformed into an unlimited range of colors and shades, from light pink to warm orange to dark red and deep brown. The idea of opposites is transformed into a fluid continuum. Presenting hundreds of skin colors as a Pantone guide, we see not opposing colors, but a warm continuous sequence of skin shades. We are all related, not opposite.

And lastly, the presentation of each headshot without any accessories or any identification of name, nationality, economic status, or sexual orientation places us all as bare colors on the same canvas. Our nude humanity and familiarity is exposed with no hierarchy. We are all equal.



History and our world are plagued with prejudices based on skin color. Skin color has been used as a sharp blade that cuts through our common humanity. We have used these differences to build impenetrable walls that separate us from the Other, the one who is different from us. We cluster ourselves with the ones like us, until we are unable to see any connectedness with those outside our group.

Some of our preconceptions are culturally built and some are fueled by our own fear of what is different from who we are and what we know. If we let them, these prejudices become an unconscious manual that guides us through the known territory and away from every road and every person that is different from what is most familiar.

In contrast, there is a growing trend of defining oneself as “color blind in regard to skin color.” I can see the nobility of the intention, but to call ourselves blind to skin color is to deny, in the process, someone else’s history, unique experiences, and culture. By being blind to our differences, we run the risk of stripping the other of some of his most profound bricks of identity.

Perhaps to not fall for color-bias or color-blindness is to be very conscious about each other, to see one another

with all our joys and struggles, our history and traditions. We need to acknowledge the other in all our commonality and to value him in all our differences. We need to celebrate our diversity and to seek to understand each other’s realities. We need not allow our differences to be points of division, but reason for encounter and dialogue. We need to be willing to learn from others’ experiences and to share our own. We need to have the courage to join forces against injustice. We need to see and love each other as members of the same family.

For the Wilson Center, *Humanae* is a message that the center is open to everyone, whichever Pantone color they happen to be. The center is defining itself as a place for the Pittsburgh community, as a whole and in all its diversity, to connect.

And for the rest of us, it serves as a good reminder that in our differences resides richness, that diversity is not a threat but an opportunity, and that peace – within our souls and with others – is found only in loving one another.

– Mariela Mazziotti Antunes

Advent Wreath Festival

Sunday, November 22
Noon – 1:30 p.m.
Fellowship Hall

The season of Advent brings a wonderful tradition: the Advent Wreath. All ages are invited to our annual Westminster Advent Wreath Festival. We will gather in Fellowship Hall immediately after the 11:00 a.m. worship service to share a simple meal, make Advent Wreaths, spend time with old friends and make new ones. Make reservations by contacting Tracey Mattes at mattes@westminster-church.org or 412-835-6630.

Sponsored by Westminster's Christian Education Coordinating Team.

Fall Rummage-Recycling Sale



Saturday, November 14

Regular sale: 8:00 a.m. – noon

Closed for lunch: noon – 12:30 p.m.

Bag and half-price sale: 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

Collection Day

Friday, November 13

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Please donate only clean and usable items. Magazines, textbooks, large pieces of furniture, and broken or unusable items will not be accepted. Leftover goods will be donated to local mission and recycling efforts.

WE NEED YOU!

Volunteers are needed both Friday and Saturday. Join the Collection Day Crew any time between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. for great fellowship, food, and shopping. On Saturday we need at least 60 volunteers. Each person will have a specific job. We also need donations of salads and desserts for the volunteers' lunches both days.

For questions or to volunteer, please call Marilyn Hayes (412-831-5704) or Jan Baumann (412-835-6630).





Mission

Six hundred and fifty volunteers of multiple generations worked together with Stop Hunger Now packaging food for children around the world. Thank you to everyone who gave time and/or money to make the event a huge success!

If you would like to get involved with other projects, we have the following opportunities in November:

- World Vision needs you on Saturday morning, November 7
- Rummage-Recycling Sale proceeds all go to local mission, Saturday, November 14
- Youth group food collection, Wednesday evening, November 18

These things can't happen without the donation of your time! Please invite a family member, friend, neighbor, or co-worker to join you.

To volunteer, or to learn more, contact Jan Baumann.

NOVEMBER

November 7

World Vision

November 14

Rummage-Recycling Sale

November 18

Youth Group Food Collection

Bricks 4 Kidz Despicable Bricks!

We Learn, We Build, We Play with LEGO Bricks

Minion fans, we have a camp for you! Who doesn't love those little yellow guys? Come and build with us as we make an adventure through their madcap world – all made out of LEGO! Kids will use fascinating and challenging LEGO components to create dynamic minion-inspired inventions, machines, and more. Bricks 4 Kidz camp will keep the pace fast and varied with guided projects and challenges as well as time for free play, so the kids are always having fun.

Instructors Ross Mlinac and Andrew Egli have been working with kids in a children-focused business since 2008. Ross has been a coach for youth sports and an instructor for Imagination Yoga. Over the years, Andrew has helped his mom in Westminster Children's and Family Ministry. They are excited to bring a program that allows kids to learn through activities that engage their curiosity and creativity! Bricks 4 Kidz...We Learn, We Build, We Play.



Boys and Girls ages 5 – 12

Camp activities are geared toward specific age groups; level of challenge varies based on age of child.

December 28, 29, and 30

9:00 a.m. – noon or

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Cost: \$75.00

Includes a Bricks 4 Kidz t-shirt. Family discount of \$10 for each additional child.

Makes a great Christmas gift!

Check out the new session of WROC Fitness classes beginning in November.

PiYo

Although traditional Yoga and Pilates are a favorite of many, the pace is just too slow for some folks. Not with PiYo, which combines the muscle-sculpting, core-firming benefits of Pilates with the strength and flexibility advantages of yoga. Try your first class free! Registration is ongoing; you can join the class any time during the session.

November 2 – December 21
Mondays and Thursdays: 9:45 – 10:45 a.m.

\$56
Pay per class: \$5

Gentle Yoga

A.M. and P.M.
(55+ Friendly)

This yoga class emphasizes a gentle form of the classical hatha yoga poses and slow-moving yoga postures. It is non-competitive, fun, and appropriate for people of all sizes, fitness levels, and ages. This gentler, slower-paced yoga program will improve your flexibility, increase your strength and vitality, reduce tension, and enhance inner calmness. Both men and women are welcome. There are no age limitations.

November 4 – December 16
Wednesdays: 10:15 – 11:15 a.m.

November 2 – December 14
Mondays: 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

\$63
Pay per class: \$12

THE GALLERY AT WESTMINSTER

Norman Schumm's exhibit *GONE* will continue for a few more weeks. It has been a popular exhibit, bringing recall to some of the most memorable images of our past.

Beginning mid-November, the gallery will explore two unique Western Pennsylvania gardens. Each of these gardens covers about 40 acres and has been developed over the past 25-40 years by the creativity and tenacity of their owners.



The gardens of Raku Place, in McKean, PA, are reminiscent of those in Kyoto, Japan. Once a neglected site, the land has been turned into a “mind journey,” as the viewer walks by and over “sky mirrors” (Koi ponds and more) within multiple gently-cultivated, civilized “gardens.” There are bridges to cross, and a reflective path to be traveled alone, in silence. One can stop by the tea house and a nearly-completed manmade mountain before coming to the Cloud Garden, the journey’s end. Susan Kemenyffy explains: “The spatial ambience and plantings echo the ebb and flow, the simplicity and complexity, the joy and questioning of each of our hours.”

Susan and her husband, Steven Kemenyffy, owners and creators of Raku Place, are both world renowned for their art and sculptures. They have always worked both together and separately. As Steven is the studio sculptor with Susan the Raku draftsman, so too is their partnership in the gardens. Once Steven’s bulldozer and high lift dug and placed dozens of boulders, crafted a mile of paths, and safely secured the cantilevered tea house, Susan brought treasured compost to place many thousands of her propagated plants, so that Raku Place would become an oasis of natural beauty and meaning.



The Blackwood gardens in Harrisville, PA (developed by Ben Robertson and Don Fink, owners of the former Blackwood Gallery in Pittsburgh) differ in appearance and feeling from those of Raku Place. Both gardens have broad woodlands, areas with still waters that induce contemplation, and gardens that are continually being groomed by the hands of their owners. But Blackwood has more open spaces, more color, and archetypal elements that make it a “state of mind,” as Susan Kemenyffy says, “an ambience of sound and silence, sight and insight.” Within its glorious, ever-varying gardens, the main house at Blackwood has a music room with a mighty Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ; and nestled among the hillside trees, there is a four-story memorial tower with a vintage Seth Thomas clock and a Schulmerich carillon. Faint sounds of music might be heard as one walks the grounds or sits in a shady nook for reading, or watching the butterflies and other small creatures flit about their sanctuary home. In place of original sculptures, Blackwood’s gardens include statue fountains, a whimsical dragon, and a bronze plaque quoting, in entirety, Robert Frost’s poem *The Road Not Taken*.

Both gardens are shaped with areas for “ephemeral moments of shared walking and talking and resting.” Folks come for a tour or special event and they linger, sometimes until twilight, not wanting to end their garden experience.

As the early days of fall give way to the busy holiday seasons, we realize how quickly our calendars are filled with many events and activities. That's why it is a good idea to make note of some special music programs. Take a moment to note the following events on your calendar. Label them "Must Attend," and you won't miss some of the best music of this fall.



Saturday, November 7
7:30 p.m.

Chanticleer Concert

Sanctuary

Adults \$25

Students \$10

(tickets available online
or in the church office)



Sunday, December 13
7:00 p.m.

Annual Christmas Concert

Sanctuary

Featuring all of
Westminster's
wonderful choirs.

The Chancel Choir
will sing John
Rutter's *Gloria*,
an exciting and
uplifting 18-minute
piece that is
guaranteed to put you
in the holiday spirit



December 24

Christmas Eve

5:00 p.m.

Family service

7:00 p.m.

Contemporary candlelight
service in the WROC

9:00 & 11:00 p.m.

Traditional service of
lights, scripture, and
carols in the sanctuary

VOLUNTEERS AMONG US



Lois Kienholz and **Karen Ralston** met and became friends many years ago teaching Sunday school together here at Westminster Church. Through the years they have each volunteered in numerous capacities, but currently they are known as Westminster's Design Team. Since 2005, Karen and Lois have beautifully and graciously taken care of the aesthetic needs of what they fondly call "this big house." With 22 bathrooms and an abundance of offices, meeting rooms, and hallways, there is always some redecorating in the works at Westminster.

The Design Team evolved out of a need to use and take care of furniture and art donations given to the church. Both Karen and Lois have great interests in color, design, arts, and antiques. Lois, in fact, ran an antique shop years ago. Asked to help incorporate donations into our church building, Karen and Lois showed a real love for style and beauty. Ten years later, they can look back and see that there is probably not a room in the church that they have not humbly touched.

The Design Team works in many ways. When a new employee joins the church staff, Karen and Lois are often enlisted to help furnish and decorate his or her office. When the Property Commission or the church's property manager, Bill Singleton, has a project, the Design Team is brought in to help (an example being all the church signage). When church members want to leave a lasting memorial or building donation, they work with the Design Team. And, the team works closely with the Thursday Men's Rehab Team in their current projects. All told, the Design

Team picks out paint, flooring, and carpet, shops for wallpaper and furniture, frames and hangs pictures, picks out and installs window treatments, and constantly makes sure our building is fresh and up-to-date. They often get many usable items at the rummage sale and at resale shops. As you walk around our church building, notice the lovely furniture arrangement in the north entry, the newer bathroom in the narthex, the inviting reception area in the office wing, and the beautiful bride's room, among many other areas.

Along with their families, both women have been longtime Westminster members. Karen and Lois have volunteered at the church in numerous ways. Karen has been an elder and a deacon, taught Sunday school and Barefoot School, and been on the nursery school/childcare board. Lois has taught Sunday school and Barefoot School, been on Session, and was interim director of Christian education for a year. Both women are currently on the Property Commission and volunteer at the rummage sale.

Most important, the Design Team follows 1 Peter 4:10 as their mission statement: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." Karen and Lois emphasize stewardship, while having fun and working well together with compassion and humor.

– Kris Overstreet

Gratitude and Health



Messages of gratitude for the many blessings in our lives resonate this time of year. Most well-known, of course, is the origin of the Thanksgiving holiday. The Pilgrims, having survived a treacherous sea voyage, landed at Plymouth Rock in the midst of a brutal winter. They suffered exposure, poor health, disease, starvation, and death; and yet, they gave thanks for the opportunity for a better life in this new land. In the spring, their Native American friends taught them to plant a new crop called corn. And in the fall, they gave thanks for the blessings of a bountiful harvest. As a result, our national holiday dedicated to giving thanks was created. The Thanksgiving season provides a timely opportunity to examine how an outlook of gratitude may improve our health.

Gratitude is one of the core principles of our Christian tradition, and psychologists have suggested that spirituality predicts grateful behavior. The scripture is replete with support for giving thanks in every aspect of our lives. The following passages are probably well known to you:

Psalm 118:24 This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Definition

The word gratitude is derived from the Latin *gratis*, meaning gracious, thankful, and pleasing. Gratitude is categorized as a moral virtue. Cicero wrote, "Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others." Gratitude is a personal outlook that involves noticing and appreciating the positive aspects of life, as well as the recognition that the sources of this goodness lie at least partially outside the self.

Evidence Linking Gratitude to Health

Early research studies provide compelling evidence that the expression of gratitude can have a profound and positive effect

on our health, moods, relationships, and even life-expectancy. Researchers have suggested that grateful people are more likely to:

- Take better care of themselves physically and psychologically
- Engage in more protective health behaviors
- Get more regular exercise, eat a healthier diet, and have regular health exams
- Sleep better and have better mental alertness
- Have stronger immune systems, lower blood pressure, and fewer physical symptoms
- Cope better with stress and daily challenges and feel happier and more optimistic
- Experience more empathy and reduced aggression toward others
- Live to an older age

Earlier this year researchers assessed levels of gratitude and spiritual well-being in 200 people with asymptomatic heart failure. Remarkably, higher levels of gratitude were associated with less fatigue, higher quality sleep, less inflammation, greater self-efficacy, and better mood. Further, some participants were asked to keep an eight-week gratitude journal making daily entries of three things for which they were thankful. At the end of the eight weeks, the gratitude journal group showed a reduction in several inflammation biomarkers as well as improved heart rate variability. The researchers concluded, "It seems that a more grateful heart is indeed a more healthy heart."

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. (Colossians 3:15)

Joan E. Watson, RN, PhD, is Westminster's care associate, working on congregational care with associate pastor Tammy Yeager.

Cultivating Gratitude

Developing an attitude of gratitude requires a refocus on what we have instead of what we lack. Several strategies have been suggested to accomplish this change.

- Keep a gratitude journal. Make a habit of recording the things you are grateful for every day.
- Express gratitude directly to others. Call a friend, write a thank-you note, or verbally thank people you contact. Acknowledging appreciation for the effect others have on your life cultivates gratitude.
- Pray. Prayer is an opportunity to draw closer to God, thank God for your blessings, and seek God's guidance in cultivating gratitude.
- Meditate. Mindful meditation is a way to focus on the present without judgment.
- Focus on the positive. Talk to yourself and others in a creative, optimistic, and appreciative manner. When you look for the positive in even the most difficult situations, eventually your focus becomes more positive.

Although we don't yet have robust cause and effect data to link gratitude to improved health, there is impressive qualitative data to warrant continued study. Thanksgiving is a time to reflect on and share what we are grateful for in our lives. We can share feelings, thoughts, and attitudes of gratitude as we create, maintain, and advocate for a grateful environment. Cultivating gratitude on a daily basis doesn't cost any money and doesn't take much time, but the health benefits may be countless.

As the gratitude and health puzzle continues to evolve, perhaps you will be proactive by allowing an *attitude of gratitude* to be one of your blessings this year.

— Joan E. Watson



Help Decorate Westminster for Christmas

As the daylight hours grow shorter and the breeze turns crisp, we turn our thoughts toward a new season, holiday season. Westminster

Presbyterian Church decorated for Thanksgiving and Christmas is a glory to God and fills our hearts with gladness. Would you like to help decorate our beautiful church for Christmas? On Wednesday, December 2, the women and men of Chancel Guild decorate five trees and hang the balcony roping and dozens of wreaths. Chancel Guild welcomes you. Please join us.

Contact Joy Mahrer at 724-941-6389 or joymahrer@yahoo.com if you have questions.

All Saints' Day 2015

Sunday, November 1, is All Saints' Day, when we honor the memory of Westminster's members who have died over the past year as we remember God's faithful people through the ages in the unity of believers past and present. During worship, each name will be read, followed by a bell toll.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them."

Revelation 14:13

Mary Baumiller

Cathy Bieri

Jean Daube

Rob Furry

Luke A. Gordon

Linda Hall

Bob Hardy

Jean Holben

Anne Houck

John Kunkle

Marguerite Langenberg

June Magdsick

Gerald McNellis

Norville Meyer

Robert Nicholson

June Ormiston

Dennis Petronko

Bernie Queneau

Hal Rahn

Jean Rice

Fred Richardson

David Rylander

Susan Sheap

Margaret "Sis" Shields

William Simpson

Lillie Sirakos

A. Lawrence Spencer

Betty Stearns

Florence Stoneberg

Patty Templeton

John White

H. Dale Winger



Financial Report

As of September 30, 2015

General Fund Contributions

Year-to-Date Actual	\$ 1,428,550.64
Annual Budget	\$ 2,073,722.00
Amount needed to fulfill budget	\$ 645,171.36

Year-to-Date Income Statement

Income	\$ 1,686,231.23
Expenses	\$ 1,685,377.97
Net Position	\$ 853.26

We thank you for your wonderful support through the first nine 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 31% of our 2015 budgeted contributions yet to be fulfilled.

If you are current or ahead on your 2015 pledge, thank you for your continuing support. If you are behind on your 2015 pledge, we ask that you would consider catching up and fulfilling your pledge, so that we can continue to meet our commitments. Thank you.

Session Report

On October 19, Session welcomed 25 new members into the fellowship of Westminster Church. Many people shared the importance of the church in their lives as a community of faith where individuals and families can grow in the love and service of God.

In addition to welcoming new members and reviewing routine matters, Session heard an invitation to invite other adults to serve as volunteers in our youth ministry a couple of hours a month – a rewarding experience for everyone who participates.

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 14**, 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 Sunday, December 27, following the worship service, or Monday, December 28, or Tuesday, December 29 (9 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.)

My Name _____

Please return this form to Peg Kinsey in the church office by Monday, December 14.



WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Pittsburgh, PA 15241
www.westminster-church.org
A PC(USA) Congregation

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www.facebook.com/Westminster.Pittsburgh



www.youtube.com/user/WestminsterUSC

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give *Thanks*
in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ
Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18