



THE SPARE

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Pittsburgh, PA

Dying and Rising

The first Sunday in April is Easter, a time to reflect on the central story of creation.

The theme of dying and rising is woven across all of nature, as springtime so clearly reminds us. Leaves that turn brown and fall to the ground in autumn make room for new ones called forth in due time by the warmth of the sun. Seeds that drop and lie dormant, as though they were dead, push new life up from the earth. The whole cycle of nature seems to echo some deeper truth behind it.

A commonplace says that Easter reflects the new life of spring, but in fact it's the other way around: springtime itself is the reflection. Genesis says that God spoke a word, "Let there be light," and creation came into being. Ages hence, by our reckoning, but in the timeless reality of God, that word became flesh and "pitched his tent among us," as John's gospel declares. So the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus literally embody the Logos, the logic, the Word that made nature real. It should not be surprising, then, that the pattern of dying and rising points to all sorts of truths about the way things are.

One ancient myth has to do with dying and rising gods, or heroes that go down to the underworld and find their way back. People who enjoy debunking religion like to claim that Christianity used this old myth to transform Jesus from an ordinary rabbi into the Son of



God, spinning stories about him that were not true, though the argument is weak for lots of reasons.

C. S. Lewis, in fact, was converted from young adult atheism in part by his friend J. R. R. Tolkien's description of Christianity as a "true myth." Lewis and Tolkien were literary scholars who loved ancient stories, but Tolkien convinced Lewis that some of those myths are a deep intuition about the way things really are. The old myths foreshadow the reality of Christ because the theme of dying and rising is built into the fabric of the natural world.

And it's built into the structure of spiritual life, too. That's why Jesus says, "All those who would save their life must lose it, and whoever loses their life for

my sake will find it." We have to let go of some things, even some good things, in order to receive greater gifts. Only when we die to the old, egocentric self with all its preoccupations, cravings, and fears can we be "born again" to the new and freer "True Self," as some of the mystics call it.

When we learn to see that all of reality works on this principle, then the daily disciplines of dying to the old self turn out to be no burden at all, but a liberating, hope-filled rehearsal for the ultimate birth into life everlasting.

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 issue. Please include the author's name,
 telephone number, email address, and a title.
 All articles are subject to editing.

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Sunday Worship Services

8:30 a.m.

*Traditional
Worship*

9:45 a.m.

*The Bridge
Contemporary
Worship*

11:00 a.m.

*Traditional
Worship*

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

Holy Week Services

MAUNDY THURSDAY: April 2

7:30 p.m. Tenebrae Service with Communion in the Sanctuary

GOOD FRIDAY: April 3

No Services

Noon House of Manna Prayer 4 Peace March in Homewood

Easter Services

EASTER SUNDAY: April 5

6:30 a.m. Sunrise Service in Galbreath Chapel

8:30 a.m. Traditional Service in the Sanctuary

9:45 a.m. Contemporary Service in the WROC

11:00 a.m. Traditional Service in the Sanctuary

This Month

- 1-4** Holy Week Labyrinth in Fellowship Hall
- 5** Easter

May

- 2** 40th Annual Handbell Festival

Check the *Spire* Online

When your *Spire* gets delayed in the mail or you simply want an early peek at the next issue, go to the church's website to find the newest *Spire* (and back issues) posted well before the first of the month. Checking each new issue online ensures that you won't miss anything happening at Westminster.

From Death to Life

Have you ever thought about how the joys of Christmas and Easter differ? Christmas joy is filled with pure rejoicing, wonder, and tenderness. The incarnation of Christ as a sweet, innocent baby is the beginning of our faith's central narrative; Christ's dramatic death and resurrection is the climax. Christ overcame death for the sake of humanity, and we celebrate that triumph at Easter and on every Sunday of the year. The Lord's Day of Resurrection is at the heart of Christianity. So it is fitting for the joy of Easter to have a serious side that takes the joy to a deeper level. Easter triumph! Easter joy! Alleluia!

In worship, we sing magnificent hymns of Easter joy that tell the triumphal resurrection story, the transition from death to life eternal. We sing joyfully, yet with gravitas. Our new hymnal, *Glory to God*, includes one of the classic hymns of the Reformation, Martin Luther's "Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands" (No. 237). The title in German, *Christ lag in Todesbanden* (literally "Christ lay in death-bonds") evokes the strength of death that Christ endured for our sins. The text depicts movement from "bondage to freedom, from darkness to light, from death to life" (see the explanatory note in the hymnal), and each verse ends with "Hallelujah!" It is a powerful text.

Christ Jesus lay in death's strong bands for our offenses given; but now at God's right hand Christ stands and brings us light from heaven; therefore let us joyful be and sing to God right thankfully loud songs of hallelujah: Hallelujah!

Our Savior Jesus, God's own Son, here in our stead descended; the knot of sin has been undone; the reign of death is ended. Christ has crushed the power of hell; now death is but an empty shell. Its sting is lost forever! Hallelujah!

Here the true Paschal Lamb we see, whom God so freely gave us. He died on the accursed tree so strong his love to save us. See, his blood now marks our door: faith points to it; death passes o'er, and Satan cannot harm us. Hallelujah!

So let us keep the festival whereto the Lord invites us; Christ is the very joy of all, the sun that warms and lights us. Now his grace to us imparts eternal sunshine to our hearts; the night of sin is ended! Hallelujah!

Under the direction of Martin Luther, the tune was created from several phrases of a medieval sacred song. Luther loved music and wanted the congregation to sing, and so he favored adapting tunes that were familiar to the people. Our hymnal describes this melody as a "sturdy chorale tune." That sturdiness, in a beautiful harmonization by J.S. Bach, gives us the epitome of Easter joy.

Read about Bach's treatments of Christ lag in Todesbanden on page 11.



So let us keep the festival whereto the Lord invites us; Christ is the very joy of all, the sun that warms and lights us. Now his grace to us imparts eternal sunshine to our hearts; the night of sin is ended! Hallelujah!

CHRISTIAN FORMATION SEMINARS

Sundays at 9:45 a.m.
Galbreath Chapel

April 12 and 19

The Many Dimensions of Grief



April 12 Grief Is a Family Affair

Andrea Lurier, PhD, CT
Program Manager and Child Grief
Specialist, Highmark Caring Place

When someone in the family dies, grief affects all who are in and associated with that family. Children and adolescents experience their own set of complicated feelings. How can we as parents, grandparents, other family members, and friends help in this difficult process? Information about the complex grieving process for adults and children will be presented, including suggestions as to how we can be a support to those in grief.

The Highmark Caring Place, A Center for Grieving Children, Adolescents and Their Families is a valuable Pittsburgh resource. Information about this special, helpful organization will also be presented.

April 19 Westminster's Grief Recovery Group

David Fetterman, Pat Boyd, Bonnie Elphinstone, Sandy Conaway

You may have periodically noticed announcements in the *Spire* and in the Sunday bulletin about Westminster's Grief Recovery Group and wondered what it was all about. This seminar will provide an explanation of the what, how, when, where, and who of this group. It is a wonderful resource provided by Westminster for our members and for those in the surrounding communities who may be looking for warm Christian support during their time of grieving. Being aware and knowledgeable of the program before you may actually need it could help you and/or those you care about be more comfortable about participating should the time come when this kind of group could be helpful.

April 26

Centering Prayer: What? Why?

Nana Wilson

The practice of Centering Prayer is an invitation to deep, personal freedom. The method of Centering Prayer is a renewal of the ancient Christian tradition of contemplative prayer which was the goal of Christian spirituality for the first 16 centuries. It is not the type of prayer we are generally used to, like praying out loud or asking for something or even giving thanks. Centering Prayer complements these more active modes of prayer by facilitating a movement into a receptive prayer of resting in God. It is moving deep within ourselves, in silence, saying nothing, asking nothing, just intending to be in the Presence of the ultimate ground of being. Centering Prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline which fosters that relationship. With Centering Prayer we learn a method of listening to and resting in this Presence.

In this seminar, Nana Wilson will introduce the practice of Centering Prayer and answer any questions you might have. She also leads the Westminster Centering Prayer Group, which offers an ongoing opportunity to learn about and participate in Centering Prayer. The group meets on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in the Bride's Room.

Propel



How do we propel our love of God forward? We share it. We celebrate it. We work at it when it gets difficult.

At the time of this writing, I have gone absolutely and unquestionably crazy. The title of this column has made sense to each and every person who has encountered me in the last couple of weeks. There are two principal reasons for this. For starters, as a Lenten devotion, I have given up coffee. I am currently two weeks in, and crave it more than ever before. Friends have noticed I am a bit more edgy in the morning. Sarah won't speak to me before noon. The people at Starbucks have been calling to ask if I'm okay. I'm a wreck.

All kidding aside, the second reason I have been a bit looney lately is because I haven't been able to ride my bike in well over a month. This has left me more than a little stir crazy. Every day I think to myself that I can make it work in my schedule, and then the snow or the rain or the freezing rain or the sub-zero temperatures force me to stay home. The other night I came home and saw my bike sitting in the garage, and I just stared at it for a little while longingly. My YouTube consumption has turned almost exclusively to cycling related videos, which just further makes me sad because it looks like everyone is having fun except me. I've even contemplated putting the bike on my car's roof rack and just driving it around town a little bit, so that at least the bike can get some fresh air.

Every now and again I start to wonder why it is I miss this sport. Sure, it's a lot of fun, but it is also a lot of work. The entire vehicle works only as hard as I am willing to work on its behalf. The wheels will not spin unless my legs are pumping. If I am unwilling to move the bike, the bike will not move. The moment I hit resistance, whether in the form of a hill or a stiff breeze in my face, my ability to propel the bike forward is difficult. Yet

somehow, even after all the difficulties in achieving forward motion, I still love it. I think I always will.

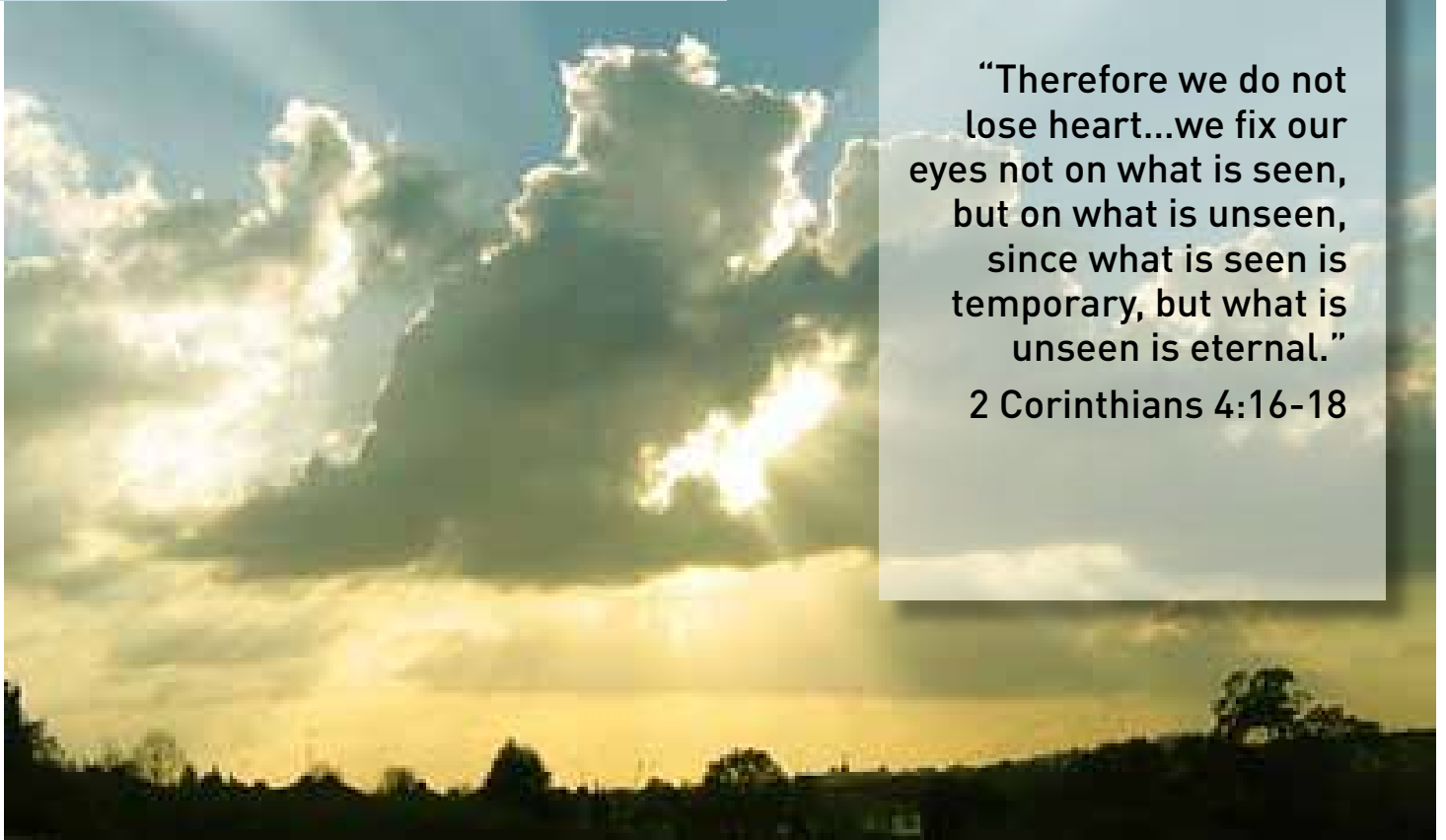
What does forward motion look like in a Christian faith? How do we continue to propel ourselves forward in a spiritual sense? Like most things in my head, it looks a lot like cycling. If I want to succeed, I need to train. In a spiritual sense, we need to engage in spiritual disciplines like meditation and stillness. The bike does not move forward if I do not put in effort. While God does a great many things in and through us, our awareness of God's action in our lives kind of depends on whether we show up or not.

And yet, I find myself an evangelist for both. I want to find more people to go on bike rides with, especially people who have never been on a bike before. It's so exciting to see someone who has never done something I love enjoy it for the first time. For some reason, the evangelism of the faith comes with more difficulty for me and for many of us. How is it that it is so difficult to talk about something we so enjoy? These are some of the questions we'll be asking at High School Veritas this month, and I hope they're conversations you'll have with your family. How do we propel our love of God forward? We share it. We celebrate it. We work at it when it gets difficult. We enjoy the moments in life when we get to coast downhill.

And remember to hope. By the time you're reading this, spring will already be here!

Godspeed,

BETWEEN HERE AND THERE



“Therefore we do not lose heart...we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”
2 Corinthians 4:16-18

I imagine we've all experienced periods in our lives during which things just seem "off." Much has been said about the causes of these periods: too much work; not enough leisure; poor health; mental, hormonal, physical, or even social imbalances. We could spend page upon page discussing these causes, all of which, I admit, may be valid. I wonder though if some of these so-called causes aren't actually symptoms of a prior affliction.

Let's start with a few scriptures. The fourth chapter of 2 Corinthians says, "Therefore we do not lose heart... we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." Luke 1:33 says of Jesus' reign, "his kingdom will never end." And finally, 1 Peter 1 says we are heirs to "an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade." In the glory and salvation offered to us by God's grace through Jesus Christ, we have eternal, never-ending, imperishable, unfading rewards. My speculation is that in the times when we've begun to feel "off," we've shifted our attention from the eternal to the temporary.

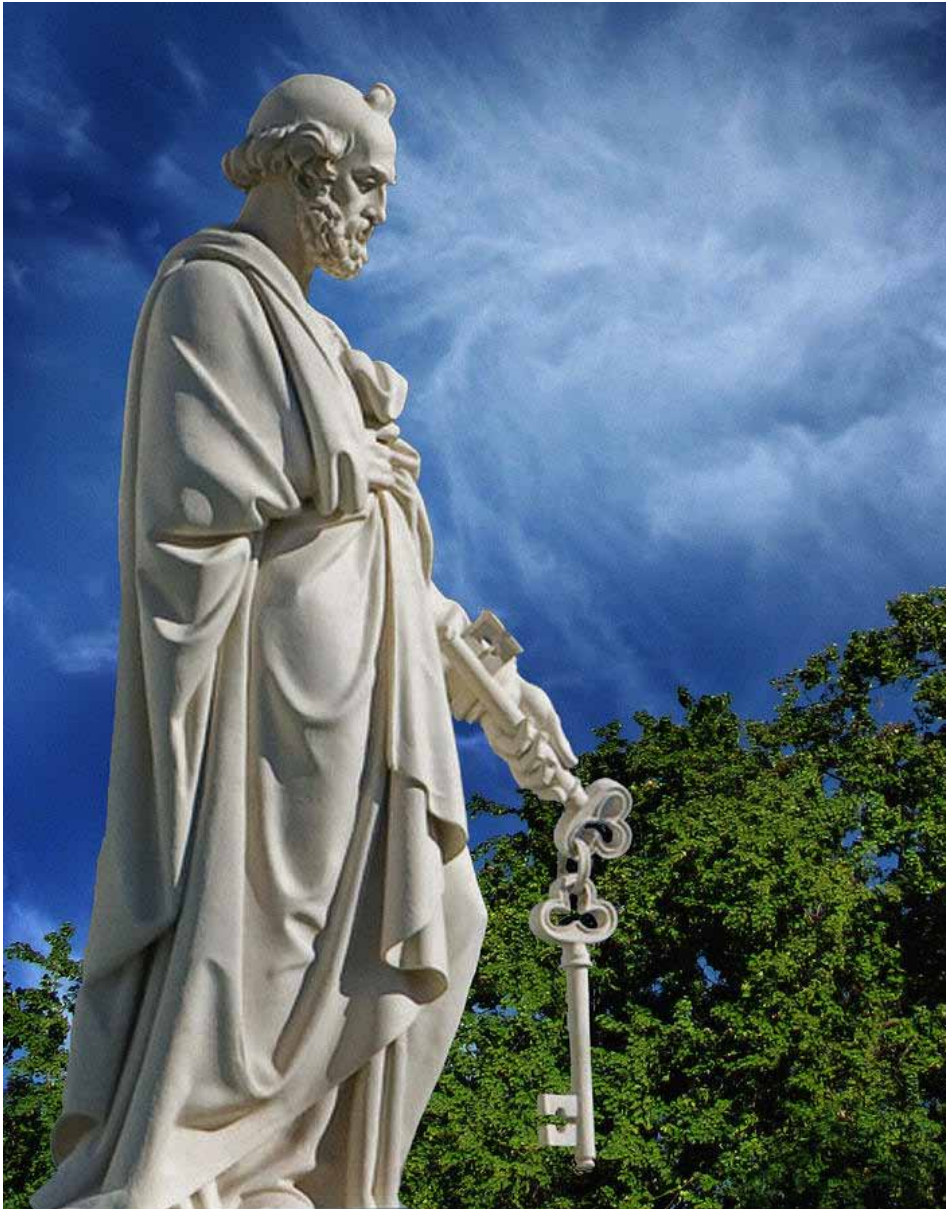
This raises an interesting question: what are we to make of the times when our faith is precisely the part of our life that feels off kilter? It's in these moments that we must refocus our efforts on the primary goal of our faith, as Paul puts it in Philippians 3:8, "I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of *knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.*" We must seek, before all else, to *know Christ Jesus.* Through this relationship with Christ there will be changes, perhaps even improvements, in our relationships, values, and satisfaction in life. These improvements, however, are not the primary goal of our faith; they are side effects. Often, when our faith feels off balance, it's because we are no longer experiencing life the way we once did: our prayer life is suffering, our motivation has dipped, or our spiritual energy is waning.

When we feel a fading in our faith, it's possible that we've lost focus of the permanent and imperishable offer of a relationship with the eternal God. We say things like "I don't feel it like I used to" or "things aren't clicking the way I thought they would," we've promoted the side effects to primary importance. Just as newlyweds vow to one another "for better

or worse, in sickness and health..." we must recognize that in our relationship with Christ we are bound to experience not only times of great joy, but times of sorrow and confusion as well. These latter experiences in no way negate or diminish the presence and reality of our relationship.

Jesus prayed, "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3). Our eternal life and relationship with the eternal God can begin here and now. We must, first and foremost, seek to *know Jesus.* For better or worse, in sickness and health, our relationship with Christ is of primary importance.

So, where do you fall today? Better or worse, sickness or health? I'd love to talk it through with you. Give me a call or drop me an email sometime soon.



Each year during Lent, we try to introduce a new topic and/or style for the Bible study portion of our JAM program, the youth group that's designed for fifth and sixth grade students. During the year we spend a lot of time talking about Jesus, but this Lent we are spending some time getting better acquainted with some of the people who actually knew Jesus during his mortal life. The idea is that by getting to know these other folks better, we might actually discover something new about Jesus. And we might learn something about ourselves, too. We've studied Martha and Mary, Judas Iscariot, Pontius Pilate, and Mary Magdalene. But we started with Simon Peter.

We watched a short video about Peter, a fun cartoony overview of Peter's life that managed to hit all of the important moments – almost every story that we know about Peter and his interactions with Jesus. We also read several of the scripture passages that provided more detail to these stories.

I asked the kids to describe Peter. Here's what they said:

- He's crazy
- He likes to impress other people
- He's really full of himself – he thinks he's pretty awesome
- He cares what other people think (maybe more than he cares about doing what is right)

- He spends a lot of time thinking about himself
- When he's wrong, he's *really* wrong
- But Jesus loves him anyway

All in all, (and this might have been my favorite moment of all) he was pretty much a “bipolar disciple.” (Seriously, this is a quote from one of the students.)

What a great description of Peter! One of Peter's best qualities, of course, is his enthusiasm, his passion. Whatever Peter is feeling, whatever he believes, he does it full out, to the extreme.

Sometimes that means he messes up, he gets it wrong. And when he messes up, it's in a big way: he often thinks about himself first; he witnesses Jesus' transfiguration, but wants to build booths for Jesus, Elijah, and Moses on the mountain; he thinks he knows better than Jesus, arguing that Jesus should not die and rise again; he denies even knowing Jesus, not once, but three times.

But when Peter gets it right, he's really right – he is “all in”: he drops everything to follow Jesus; he trusts Jesus enough to get out of that boat in the middle of a storm; he declares that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God; three times he answers Jesus, “you know I love you Lord.” One of my favorite stories about Peter is when Jesus is washing the disciples' feet. Peter resists – it's not right for the Messiah, his Lord and Savior, to perform such a demeaning task, work fit for a servant, a slave. But once Peter understands what Jesus is doing, his response is again “all in”: “Then, Lord, not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!”

See what we mean? And somehow, despite all the big mistakes Peter makes, Jesus loves him anyway – and uses him in a really big way – as the cornerstone for the whole body of believers, the church. So we've challenged ourselves, these kids and I, during this season of Lent and beyond to be a little more like Peter – to be “all in” for Jesus. Will you join us?

Robin

Live Long and Prosper

On February 27, a hero of mine died. Leonard Nimoy acted in many roles throughout his career, but he was probably best known for his iconic *Star Trek* character, Spock – the half human-half Vulcan First Officer on the Starship Enterprise. Spock was known for many things, one probably more than all of the others: the Vulcan Blessing. With his right hand raised, fingers joined in a double V, and thumb extended perpendicular to his hand, Spock would say, “Live long and prosper.”

Amanda Pogrebin wrote *Stars of David: Prominent Jews Talk About Being Jewish*. Leonard Nimoy, a man for whom his Judaism was a central part of who he was, was one of the “stars” about whom she wrote. In her conversation with Nimoy she asked him about the origin of the Vulcan Blessing and wrote:

He invented the hand signal based on his memory of seeing the rabbis do it when they said the priestly blessing. Nimoy recites the prayer for me in Hebrew and then translates: “It says, ‘May the Lord bless and keep you and may the Lord cause his countenance to shine upon you, may the Lord be gracious unto you and grant you peace.’”

Nimoy then chuckled and wondered who would have thought that all of those people who have since raised their hand in the distinctive way that Spock did and then said, “Live long and prosper,” weren’t just imitating a science fiction character but were blessing others.

Since his death and subsequent reading of Pogrebin’s interview with him, I have been thinking a lot about blessings. What are they? Why are they important? Are they just words? Blessings are so much more than words and need to be taken seriously when spoken or heard. In the world of the scripture, a blessing had the force of indicating God’s presence in our midst. Blessings, to be sure, aren’t like magical incantations such as saying “abracadabra” to conjure up God’s presence. No. God is always present regardless of whether we speak words of blessing or not, and the words of blessing remind us powerfully of what is already

true: God is present – sustaining, guiding, empowering. When pastors lift their hands at the conclusion of the service and speak words of blessing, it is far more than a liturgical goodbye, a way to end the service. Instead, it is a powerful reminder that God has been present in the service of worship and will continue to be present as we scatter into the world. The words of blessing remind us powerfully of what is already true.

Can you think of a time when a blessing has especially touched you to the core of your being and caused you to know God’s presence? I remember a hot June day in 1980. That was the day my bishop, Roy C. Nichols, ordained me. How I remember his words of blessing. I knelt before him. A number of my ministerial colleagues joined him in laying hands on my head. As he intoned solemn words of blessing I happened to look up and into his eyes. Nearly 35 years later I can still see his eyes and hear his words and remember the reminder that God was in that place and in my life. All because of the special connection created by those words of blessing.

And that is what blessing is all about. Not to be spoken or heard lightly but with wonder and thanksgiving. Who would have thought that Leonard Nimoy in creating his character would have turned to his Jewish roots and incorporated the power of blessing as central to the being of Spock? Like I can still experience in my mind’s eye Bishop Nichols’ blessing, Nimoy remembered his rabbi’s oft-repeated blessing and made it live in Mr. Spock, a blessing with origins in what is sometimes called “the Blessing of Aaron” (Numbers 6:22-27, CEB):

The Lord spoke to Moses: Tell Aaron and his sons: You will bless the Israelites as follows. Say to them:

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord lift up his face to you and grant you peace.

So often we hear words of blessing. Often we also say words of blessing. Remember the power of those words, power to remind us of the presence of almighty, ever-loving God. Remember also the ability of those words to unite us as children of that God in daily confidence and hope. Blessings are more than just words spoken and heard. They have the power to touch us, to transform us, to comfort us, to inspire us, to send us forth in confidence, to renew our hope.

So as we conclude the season of Lent and move forward into the season of Easter with its theological exclamation point for all of our blessings, I offer these words to you:

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord lift up his face to you and grant you peace.

Shalom,




Faster, I'm in a Hurry



“Faster, I’m in a hurry to move beyond grief.” “I’m in a hurry to leave this pain behind.” “I’m in a hurry to go on with my life.” “I’m in a hurry to feel whole again.” We all have said or thought some of these phrases at some point in our lives, haven’t we? At times when we’ve lost someone we loved or when things didn’t turn out the way we hoped, and an unbearable pain took over, and the hole in our chest made it hard to breathe, and our mind didn’t seem to be ours anymore, and everything was paused in our grief. And we kept saying, “Faster, I’m in a hurry! I want this pain to go away.” And we were pulled by a snail, moving so slowly that it was unnoticeable at times. Upset and invaded by sadness, we kept saying, “Faster! Please!”

The picture above is an image of street art in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It’s a mural by street artist Martín Ron. The painting is in hyper-realist style mixed with surrealist elements, which translates into very intriguing imaging. And yet, the artist doesn’t quite clue us in on what his painting means. In an interview, Ron said that he likes people to interpret, to discover their own meaning in his art. I find that attitude, shared by many other artists, very generous. It’s the idea: “Here it is, what I’ve created, and yet something that does not belong to me anymore. Now it’s yours, the viewer, and you are free to find the meaning that comes to you, or free to find no meaning at all.” It’s the humble attitude that says, “I don’t need to dictate what my art is, I find value in sharing it with you. And now this piece is a little bit yours too, and the meaning that emerges in your mind and heart, it’s all yours to keep.” Thanks to the talent and generosity of the artist, I saw the journey of grief. I felt the sense of powerlessness: the feeling that the more we want the pain to go away, the more our carriage seems to be stuck in the mud of sadness. And the more we hit the leash for our grief to disappear faster, the slower we seem to move. But I saw, too, that underneath it all, underneath the heaviness of our sorrow, God is bearing our pain and he is sharing in our journey even, or especially, when we are so consumed by the hurt that we cannot feel his presence.

Perhaps the truth is that we can’t really make our grief go away any faster. And still our suffering is proof of the wonderful gift of love. We loved so much that the absence now seems unbearable, and yet that absence is born out of the experience of the fullness of love. Or we hoped so much that the agony of the unrealized hope now threatens to smother our spirit, and yet that hope was a gift that filled our hearts and energized our souls. And we now look around and we feel stuck in the slow journey of grief, detained in time and stopped in the gray, thick fogginess of sadness. And it will be yet another gift, our faith, what will light our way, and its strength will slowly pull our carriage forward till the day our grief turns to joy. And until then, we can trust, today and always, that amid all our suffering God is directing our path and bearing upon himself the heaviness of our souls. And he will see us through our darkest days, even if, for the time being, our pain seems to move at a snail’s pace.

– Mariela M. Antunes

And until then, we can trust,
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our suffering God is directing our
path and bearing upon himself
the heaviness of our souls.

Enter Easter with Bach

The hymn *Christ lag in Todesbanden* (see p. 4) is an excellent starting point for exploring J.S. Bach's music for the season of Easter. And the Internet is a wonderful resource: a quick search online will yield both information and performances.¹ Wikipedia is a good enough first step, but don't stop there. For listening to Bach in general, YouTube has multiple choices – alas, of varying quality – for most works. Trial and error is the best approach for finding a performance you like. Translations of German texts are easy to find; the cantata translations from Emmanuel Church in Boston are especially clear and reliable.

Bach composed three settings of *Christ lag* for organ. The index number for Bach's works, the BWV number, is the simplest way to identify a piece, particularly when searching online. BWV 625, the shortest and most familiar setting, comes from the *Orgelbüchlein*, a beloved collection of preludes to hymns based on the church year. This setting places the tune clearly in the soprano part, with much activity in the hands and feet underneath. In the other two settings, the tune is absorbed in the texture of the music. BWV 719 calls for two keyboards and pedal and includes much ornamentation and elaborate keyboard figuration. BWV 695, for manual alone in a dancing triple meter, is a trio that surrounds the melody in the alto voice with cheerful lines of counterpoint. In these organ pieces, Bach has given us three ways to hear Easter joy.

Listening to Bach's cantata based on *Christ lag* (BWV 4) is perhaps the most satisfying way to immerse yourself in the meaning of the text as interpreted by Bach through intense, emotionally charged music. Dating from early in Bach's career, this cantata sets all seven verses of Luther's hymn in seven distinct movements. It is a dramatic and powerful musical expression of Luther's theology of Easter. On YouTube, the live recording of Musica Amphion and the Gesualdo Consort Amsterdam² is outstanding in quality of sound and performance. Of course, there are many other performances to choose from. Find one you like and listen to this deeply spiritual cantata, and listen again and again. Through it, Bach will help you renew your faith this Easter.

– Sara Kyle

Johann Sebastian Bach

¹ If listening on your computer whets your appetite for more Bach cantatas, go to www.bach-cantatas.com. The site has much information on each cantata, including texts and translations, opinion articles, and lists of recordings. If you want to find more organ works of Bach and his contemporaries online, go to www.positivelybaroque.com, an Internet radio station devoted to organ music of the 17th and 18th centuries. When each piece is played, the recording is listed, which is helpful for future listening.

² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_PinoZvY5Q

the Spring Rummage-Recycling Sale

Is Coming

Collection Day
Friday, May 8

Sale Day
Saturday, May 9

It's time to start collecting your unused or unneeded clothes, books, kitchen and household items, appliances, electronics, sporting goods, jewelry, small furniture pieces, etc. You name it, we'll take it unless it's too big, broken, or unusable.

A mission effort: all proceeds benefit mission projects, and all leftover goods are donated to local mission or recycling efforts.

A volunteer opportunity: please consider volunteering for several hours on one or both days. We especially need men and energetic volunteers on Saturday.

Questions? Please call Marilyn Hayes at 412-831-5704.



Bells in Christian Times

Bells have played an integral part in the Christian world for over 1,500 years: calling villagers to wake, to work, to worship, and to arms; proclaiming the joy of a marriage or birth; and tolling to announce a death. In 400 AD, the Bishop of Nola in Campania, Italy, conceived the idea of hanging a large brass kettle above the church and striking it with a hammer in order to gather the citizens of the town. The implementation of bells on a larger scale appeared in the mid-6th century, when monks and friars introduced their use and effectiveness in their travels to join religious orders. By the 7th century, bells rang throughout Italy, France, and England.

Bells were thought to have supernatural powers in the Middle Ages. It is said that the Bishop of Aurelia used the ringing of a bell to warn his townspeople of an enemy attack. Upon hearing the bell tolling, the enemies fled in fear and the villagers credited the bell with saving them. "In a world with little man made noise, the sound of bells was not only majestic, but could be deeply fearful." Later, bells were baptized and were considered to have the power to keep evil spirits away. This belief led to the hanging of bells in doorways to keep evil spirits from slipping into a home. Doorbells may have arisen from this early supposition. In addition, a "passing bell" was rung at the foot of a deathbed to drive away evil spirits who were "ready to seize a person's soul as he died." Ringers were paid more to ring a bigger bell because "it kept the spirits further away and gave the departing soul a better start."

The discovery that the higher the bells were suspended from the ground, the farther away they could be heard, prompted the construction of campaniles or bell towers. Bell towers in Holland and Belgium contained sets of 23 to 70 tuned bells, or carillons, which were played by a single person in front of a keyboard of horizontal levers. Each bell clapper was attached to a single lever by a metal wire, enabling specific tones to be rung. Many early bell towers still exist today. These "singing towers" are the forerunners of the carillon in Westminster's church spire.

In the 16th century, England devised a mathematical system of ringing tower

bells. "Change ringing" did not use the one person/one keyboard method; instead, a rope hung from each individual bell, and each bell was played by one person. Using a numerical order, from the highest to the lowest pitch, all bells rang once at each pull of the rope, before changing place with another bell. Each "change" was graphed in a numerical sequence, much different from the musical notes on a scale that is used today. While not producing melodies or harmonies, it is noted that "Change ringing is musical, mathematical, athletic, and the rhythm of the ringing must be regular and steady." In the mid 1700s, newspapers presented information that a three-hour peal of 5,040 changes was common. Records indicate that in 1731 a peal in Leicester, England, lasted for more than three hours "to the great satisfaction of thousands both in town and country."

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord

In order to perfect the intricate patterns of change ringing, practice was lengthy. It was also extremely noisy. As a result, in the 17th century, the smaller handbell was developed and bell practices moved from unheated bell towers to warm indoor rooms in homes, churches, and in many cases, village taverns. Shortly thereafter, ringers became interested in playing melodies, and arrangements of hymns and folk songs were composed. With bell choir members assigned to play specific notes, all members were needed at practices and performances or a section of the music would be missing. By the end of the 18th century, most villages in England had their own handbell choir. Present day English handbells have descended from this smaller practice instrument. Named not for the country of origin, but for the type and tuning of the bell, this handbell is a chromatically tuned percussion instrument. The bells played by the Westminster Ringers are English handbells which were manufactured in Pennsylvania.



Bells are no longer used to gather people to safety but still gather people to worship God. Bells continue to proclaim celebrations and mark deaths, as well as deliver both joyous and contemplative music to worshipers. But above all, bells "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord," as we "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise" (Psalm 100:1, 4).

– Laurie Malarkey

Sources for further information and quotations in the article: www.bellringing.org; www.handbellringers.com; www.riverbells.org.

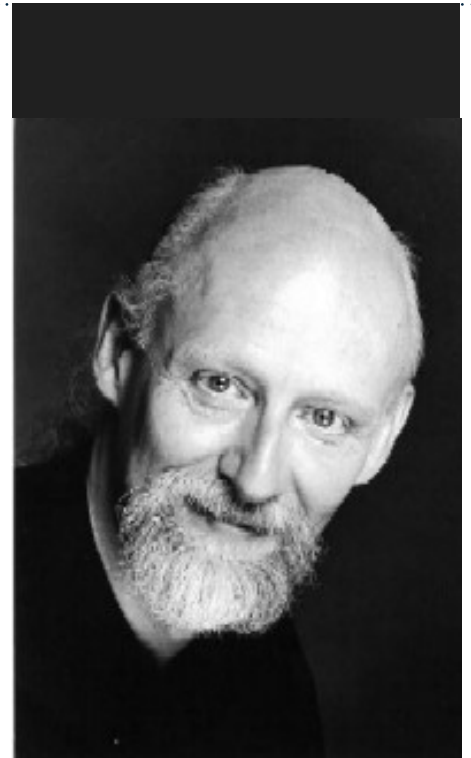


40th Annual *Handbell* Festival

Saturday, May 2, marks the date when Westminster will be alive with the sound of ringing. Organized by the North Hills Handbell Association, multiple area handbell choirs have been invited to participate in a “massed ring” festival. Under the direction of Timothy H. Waugh, the bell choirs will present nine musical selections, with four of these pieces composed by the director. Various choirs throughout Pennsylvania and Ohio have performed together for the past 40 years in the North Hills of Pittsburgh. The 2015 Handbell Festival, the first concert to be held in a southern Pittsburgh location, will be hosted by Westminster Presbyterian Church in the WROC at 4:30 p.m. The public is invited to attend, with donations kindly accepted. Suggested donation: \$6.



Saturday, May 2
4:30 p.m.
WROC



Timothy H. Waugh, a nationally and internationally known composer and director, has been commissioned to lead the 40th annual performance of Pittsburgh’s Handbell Festival at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Director Waugh, a popular conductor and clinician for the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers, is recognized for his work in musicality and rhythmic acuity. A champion of the performing arts, Mr. Waugh’s life’s work includes choral, handbell, and musical theatre instruction in a public school setting. A music educator for 27 years, Timothy Waugh presently serves as the department chair of music and fine arts for Pike View High School in Princeton, West Virginia. Waugh, as described by a colleague, is “a consummate and eclectic musician. Tim brings to the manuscript, podium, stage and classroom an energy and vitality that seems to ensure the success of performers of every age and ability.”

Spring and Summer Activities Are Heating Up at the WROC!

Faith Night at PNC Park



**Players and coaches share their faith stories after the game
Pirates vs. San Francisco Giants
Thursday, August 20, 7:05 p.m.**

Join your church family for fun and fellowship on Thursday, August 20, and root for the Pirates as they play the San Francisco Giants. We'll begin the evening at 5:00 p.m. with a tailgate party in Lot 4 on the third base side of the park. Food will be provided.

Following the game, we'll relocate to the sections from home plate to the end of the Pirates dugout along the third base line to hear Pirate players and coaches share how their faith has affected both their lives and their careers in baseball.

Join us for any or all parts of the evening.

Seats: Grandstand /Section 313/Rows N, M, P, Q and Section 314/Rows J and K

Cost: \$25 per ticket – includes ticket to the game and dinner at tailgate; \$22 per ticket – ticket to game only

Tickets can be purchased online only at wroc.westminster-church.org. Deadline to purchase tickets is May 25. All sales are final. You'll receive a confirmation of your purchase, and tickets will be mailed to your home in June. If you do not have the ability to register online, please contact Kathy Long at 412-835-6630.

Westminster Ladies Nine and Dine



Whatever your skill level, join us at Lindenwood Golf Club this summer for fun and fellowship. After each lesson, participants are welcome to follow up with dinner and fellowship.

Introductory Golf Clinic

If you have always wanted to learn to golf but aren't sure where to begin, this is the program for you! We'll begin with five weeks of lessons that will transition onto the golf course. At the end of the five weeks, you may choose to start a league and meet weekly for nine holes of golf.

Lessons include:

- Fundamentals of golf, including stance, grip, posture, and alignment
- Learning to putt, chip, and transition to full swing with irons
- Moving onto the long game with woods and drivers
- Situation golf that will transition onto the golf course

Rental clubs are available at an additional cost. Clinic will be held on Thursdays, May 7 – June 4, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. at Lindenwood Golf Club.

Art and Beauty: A Drawing and Painting Class

Expressing Your Faith through Art



The works of the Lord are great, studied by all who have pleasure in them. His work is honorable and glorious, and his righteousness endures forever.

Psalm 111:2-3



Shari Finney, a spiritually inspired artist, will guide and encourage participants to express their faith through art. Participants will choose from several subjects (still life, etc.) to create a drawing/painting using pencil, colored pencil, or watercolor. Shari will offer group and individual instruction.

No experience is necessary. This class is designed for anyone desiring to observe, study, and reflect on paper the connection between God's great beauty/creation and art. Participants will have the option to display their art in the annex section of the Gallery at Westminster.

Join us on Saturday, April 25, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. in the Yahweh Café. Cost is \$25.00.

An artist with a focus on portraiture and still life, Shari Finney desires to reflect God's beauty, light, and creation. A 2013 and 2012 Richeson 75 International Figure/Portrait Finalist and 2010 Paint America top 100 Artist, Shari exhibits nationally and regionally, and paints in Western Pennsylvania, where she has won various awards including Best of Show.

An alumna of the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, Shari is a signature member of the Pittsburgh Pastel Artists League. Her work is found in private collections, the Fine Art Sales Gallery of the Butler Institute of Art, and Amica of Ligonier. To commission paintings or view other work, visit artbeyondwords.com.

VOLUNTEERS AMONG US



Calling All Medical Professionals

A medical mission trip to San Juan La Laguna, Guatemala, is being planned for October 2015. Doctors, a dentist, and other medical professionals are needed as well as a Spanish translator. Please contact Debby Underwood at 724-941-6449 or jeffdeb369@verizon.net to volunteer or with questions.



Since 1984, Eric Harrison has been volunteering for the Presbyterian Men Mission Networks/Volunteers in Mission. This is a group of professionals who provide a high level of assistance to small and medium churches. Services are all on a volunteer basis guiding client churches in building repairs, restoration, and/or renovations. Specific areas of craft include architecture, engineering, finance, management, and many others. Presbyterian Men affords the opportunity for professionals to give of their time and talents in their areas of expertise. For those with experience in the construction industry as a whole, there are always volunteer opportunities within this organization.

Eric retired from a career in construction management in 2007. From then until this past June he devoted himself to “giving back” by volunteering approximately 20 hours a week with the Presbyterian Men. Currently, he consults as needed. Through this organization Eric has helped many congregations understand and manage their church building care. He has delighted in meeting many people from different backgrounds, while appreciating and respecting their approaches and needs.

Volunteerism is very important to Eric because he feels each of us has specific gifts and is commanded by God to serve. He describes volunteering as a direct extension of his professional life leading to joy in serving. In this vein, Eric was part of a group of individuals who helped Jan Baumann construct Westminster’s volunteer questionnaire, used to help church members determine their gifts and talents.

Additionally, drawing and painting are pastimes Eric has enjoyed vigorously. He is self-taught and has worked with watercolor, pencil, charcoal, and pastel. Subject matters include still lifes, florals, landscapes, and portraits. He has donated several pieces of his art to Westminster, and they are currently displayed around the building.

– Kris Overstreet

Thrift as Creation Care



The idea of thrift, once commonplace during the Depression and World War II, has a role today as a way for Christians to practice creation care while enjoying healthier and more creative meals.

Creation care is the practice that comes from Genesis 2 where humans are seen as caretakers or stewards of God's creation. This scripture expresses God's wish that mankind, in the person of Adam, exercise great care over the "garden." Thinking about being caretakers of creation stimulates the question about the role church has in forming a more sustainable future for our planet. Thrift is a practical and beneficial way for today's church to encourage intentional decisions that can help decrease food waste, thereby benefiting the environment.

Millions of people across the country struggle to have enough to eat, while simultaneously millions of tons of food are being tossed in the garbage. Food waste is now recognized as a significant environmental and economic issue. The *New York Times* reported in late February that about 60 million metric tons of food is wasted each year in the United States. This had an estimated value of \$162

billion, and 32,000,000 metric tons of it ended up in municipal landfills, costing local governments about \$1.5 billion a year. Read that last sentence again; this is an astounding amount of waste. What's worse is that this is not just an American problem. Food discarded by retailers and consumers in all developed countries would be more than enough to feed all of the world's 870 million hungry people, according to the United Nations.

Food waste not only has a social cost, but it also contributes to increasing changes to our climate because the production of food consumes vast quantities of water, fertilizer, and land. A large amount of fuel is burned to process, refrigerate, and transport the food. Additionally, since most food waste is thrown away in landfills, where it decomposes and emits the potent greenhouse gas methane, you can see how all of these factors related to food waste add to a growing environmental cost.

Here's where the idea of thrift provides a small way to address food waste. Homemakers during World War II used nearly everything in the kitchen with conservation as their goal. The ham bone

would be used for making soup, and leftover vegetables would go into a stew. In Europe, classic dishes like pot-au-feu (French beef stew) sprang from a history of kitchen efficiency. Somewhere over the years the art of kitchen efficiency was lost, but thankfully it is now becoming fashionable again with many of the new generation of chefs.

A practical way to think about reducing waste is to cook more from scratch and use fewer recipes. The book *The Flavor Bible*, written by Karen Page and Andrew Dornenburg, has no recipes but encourages intuitive cooking using lists of ingredients and complementary flavors. Before the process of cooking even begins, home chefs can reduce waste by purchasing food items with less packaging. Transforming or eating leftovers is another beneficial practice.

Wasting less in the kitchen is a smart way for families to save money, eat healthier meals, and lessen the destruction of our planet. Make a pledge in your family to reduce food waste and be a better steward of God's creation.

– Will Hignett

NEW MEMBERS



Lauren & Rich Gasher



Jamie & Brett Schaltenband



Judy & Stan Over



Suzanne & Dave Palko

WELCOME

Financial Report

As of February 28, 2015

General Fund Contributions

Year-to-Date Actual	\$ 321,073.38
Annual Budget	\$ 2,073,722.00
Amount needed to fulfill budget	\$ 1,752,648.62

Year-to-Date Income Statement

Income	\$ 373,602.47
Expenses	\$ 379,620.08
Net Position	\$ (6,017.61)

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

Since 1949, Presbyterians have joined with millions of other Christians through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering to share God's love with people experiencing need. Our gifts support the ministries of the Presbyterian Hunger Program, the Self-Development of People, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

Recognizing that the hope we have in Christ is lived out in our hope for one another, we respond with gifts that help our sisters and brothers around the world find the hope for a brighter future.

Envelopes for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering will be found in the pew racks on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, as well as in your offering envelope boxes. Thank you for your generous support of the One Great Hour of Sharing.

Session Update

On March 16, Session approved grants totaling \$126,615 from Westminster's Endowment Fund for 2015. They include replacing the electronic carillon in the steeple (\$13,700); a new sound system for the Fellowship Hall and North Courtyard (\$18,500); roof replacement for areas north of the sanctuary (\$43,000); support for a clinical staff member in the Center for Victims (\$17,140); a grant toward cognitive enhancement therapy for clients at City Mission (\$21,425); and replenishing the reserve fund of Friendship Church after an emergency sidewalk repair (\$12,850).

Session also approved a policy for clearances and mandated reporting for staff and volunteers who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults, as required by changes in Pennsylvania law. A review of the discussion about same-sex marriage at Westminster indicated that the conversation is occurring in a charitable spirit. Session intends to provide ample opportunity for people to share their views and discern God's direction together before voting on Westminster's position, tentatively in June.

Luke Alexander Gordon
 Fred Richardson
 Susan Sheap
 Lillie Sirakos





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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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www.facebook.com/Westminster.Pittsburgh



www.youtube.com/user/WestminsterUSC

Risen Christ, whose absence leaves us paralyzed but whose presence is overwhelming: Breathe on us with your abundant life, that where we cannot see we may have courage to believe that we may be raised with you. To you belong *honor* and

glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Book of Common Worship



Risen Christ by Michelangelo Buonarroti