



THE SPARE

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Pittsburgh, PA

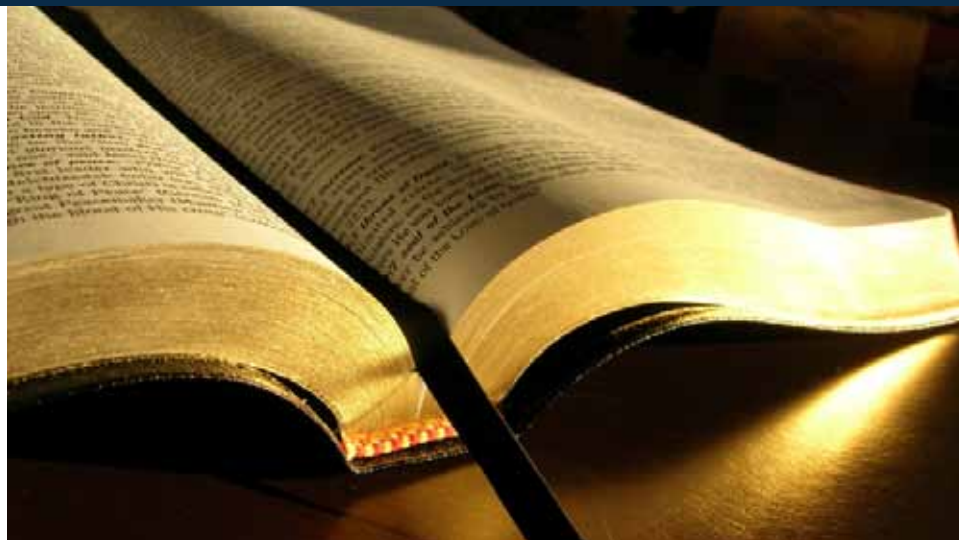
The Bible and Morality

Faithful Christians want to know how God wants us to live. We want to know what's right and wrong, and live in ways that are pleasing to God.

For moral guidance we turn first of all to the Bible because for nearly two thousand years Christians have believed that the Bible is inspired by God. Some people talk as though knowing what God wants us to do is simply a matter of reading the book and doing whatever it says; but the truth is, virtually no one does that consistently. Leviticus, for example, says, "Whoever strikes father or mother shall be put to death." The death penalty also applies, in the first few books of the Bible, to cursing parents, being a rebellious son who is a drunkard or a glutton, breaking the Sabbath, blaspheming the name of the Lord, and committing adultery, among other actions.

Most Christians would agree that those are bad things, though many fail to observe the Sabbath in any serious way. But the death penalty? Who really thinks we should stone a rebellious son? And even though adultery makes the short list of prohibitions in the Ten Commandments, do we really want to put adulterers to death? If not, is our moral guideline actually as simple as "Do what the Bible says"?

Now many Christians rush to dismiss some of those rules on the grounds



that they come from the Old Testament. But what exactly is the principle that determines which rules are binding and which ones are not? Some people even take the first part of a sentence as the literal word of God and reject the penalty prescribed at the end of the same sentence. How does that work?

It appears that many of us pick and choose which texts, or even which parts of a text, we want to enforce and which ones we don't on grounds that have more to do with what we already believe than on any clear principles of biblical interpretation. But surely we need a more reliable principle than "Read the book and do what it says," on the one hand, or "Pick the parts you like and leave out the rest," on the other.

Most people are not very clear about the principles they use in interpreting the Bible, and when pressed, they are not entirely consistent. Many are left, then, with a vague sense that what they

really believe doesn't quite square with what the Bible says. They hold their values in spite of the Bible, rather than because of it, or else they cling to some passages and reject others without a very compelling reason why.

We can do better than that, and we must, because there are important issues we need to decide if we want to be faithful to God. In the next few months we'll be talking about how the Bible can lead us to live as God would have us live. I hope you'll be part of the conversation.

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 DR. TAMMY YEAGER, *Associate Pastor for
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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PASTORS

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Staff email addresses and phone
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www.westminster-church.org.

Read the *Spire* online at:

[www.westminster-church.org/aboutus/
 spire.html](http://www.westminster-church.org/aboutus/spire.html)

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

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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.



What star is this, with beams so bright, more lovely than the noonday light?
'Tis sent to announce a newborn king, glad tidings of our God to bring.

'Tis now fulfilled what God decreed, "From Jacob shall a star proceed";
and lo! the eastern sages stand to read in heaven the Lord's command.

While outward signs the star displays, an inward light the Lord conveys
and urges them, with tender might, to seek the giver of the light.

O Jesus, while the star of grace impels us on to seek your face,
let not our slothful hearts refuse the guidance of your light to use.

Charles Coffin, 1736
Glory to God, No. 152

This Month

- 6** Epiphany of the Lord
- 11** Baptism of the Lord
- Ordination and
Installation of
Officers

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Mark 1:9-11

CHRISTIAN FORMATION SEMINARS

Sundays at 9:45 a.m.

Galbreath Chapel

January Series

Understanding Haiti

The January seminars will look at the history and culture of Haiti to help us better understand the context of Westminster's mission work in Haiti.

The partnership between Westminster and Haiti's New Testament Mission has steadily grown over the years and remains strong. Annual mission trips and ongoing projects keep Haiti in the forefront of our congregation's international outreach. We celebrate this relationship and eagerly await reports from each mission trip. Now we have the opportunity to learn how Haiti became one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere and how the Haitian culture influences the way American Christians minister to the Haitian people. Come to learn the fascinating story of Haiti.



January 4 & 11

History of Haiti

Warren Archer

January 18 & 25

Haiti Today

Bill Bollendorf, Director
Galerie Macondo

An expert on Haitian culture and art, Bill Bollendorf will present "Haiti: Saints and Spirits – The Synchronicity of Catholicism and Haitian Voodoo" on January 18. His topic for the following Sunday is "Haiti After the Earthquake."



All Our Gifts



You have five seconds to answer the following question: what are you good at?

What did you come up with? It's a difficult question to answer because so many of us in the church have placed such grand emphasis on humility and selflessness. Sometimes we feel that proclaiming our proficiencies is an act of pride. We all know people who seem to have a knack for choosing the wrong time to toot their own horns, but I'm sure we also know people who could think more highly of themselves, but can't seem to do it. There's a fine balance to work with, but we *must* know and be able to articulate our strengths.

If you're unsure of your greatest strengths, how will you know how you can best serve the kingdom of God? I'm under the impression that every strength, every skill set is of use to the kingdom. James 1:17 tells us that "Every good and perfect gift is from above." The word *every* places no limitation on gifts, and if they're all from God, then doesn't it stand to reason that he would find value in each of them? Imagine what a church would look like full of blessed and talented people using their good and perfect gifts to advance God's

kingdom. How beautiful! How unique! How powerful!

It's unfortunate that our culture has chosen a select few sets of gifts that help to determine worth and value in a person. Beauty, financial comfort, athleticism, and humor have all been long-held as valuable and worthy in our culture. I get the notion that intellect and "creative thinking" have been on the rise recently, and then there are some of the less tangible gifts that are more difficult to measure: work ethic, loyalty, and compassion. Of course the list goes on, but what does this mean for a person whose unique gifts fall outside the realm of these predetermined sets?

For people who find their strengths in less buzz-worthy areas, it can often be difficult to value their own gifts. Practically speaking, when we don't value things, we tend not to use them to their full potential. If we don't value the gifts we've been given, or the strengths that are within us, we're likely to leave them underutilized. It's hard to imagine the heaping pile of gifts and talents that have been left untouched and unappreciated in our congregation alone.

Romans 12:3-8 paints for us a beautiful

image of the church, the body of Christ. In its essence it says, "Whatever your gift is, use it to its full potential." It places no value system on gifts; there are no second-class blessings. Instead it offers us the hope and the encouragement that each of our gifts is of value to the body and the kingdom. I fear that too many of us have skipped past this truth and viewed our own gifts as second-class, minimizing their potential. When we minimize the value of what we have been given, we minimize the value of what it can do for others.

You are gifted. You are talented. You are blessed. Chances are, there are gifts in your life that you've left unused, and maybe even forgotten. Have a conversation with God about what those may be and how you can work with him to use them to advance the boundaries of God's kingdom.

So, what are you good at? How can you use that gift to spread the love of Christ? I'd love to hear your ideas!

Ed

GLIMPSE OF MY WORLD

Maturity

I've been thinking about maturity.

Okay – I live with four teenagers, and a great deal of what we do together, the conversations we have, the decisions we make are designed to help them grow up, to help them become more mature. So I am often thinking about what characteristics we want them to develop. Of course we want them to be responsible, to make good decisions, to do well in school so that they can become self-supporting adults. We want them to learn how to deal with all sorts of people, to save money, to be happy. To be mature in their faith.

What does it mean to be a mature Christian?

I recently asked the members of the Children's & Family Commission to help me think about this topic. We each thought of people we know who we would identify as being mature in their faith, and then shared our descriptions of those folks.

Here are the characteristics we identified. Mature Christians are:

- Humble
- Joyful
- Forgiving
- Confident
- Patient and understanding
- Dependable
- Appreciative
- Empathetic
- Wise
- Willing to ask for help
- Have a good sense of humor, can let go of the small stuff and laugh at themselves
- Can step back from details, avoiding drama and fuss
- Keep things in perspective
- Know and value what's important – like family and friends
- Have dealt with big life changes and struggles, they have experience of life
- Can delegate – they can see and appreciate and use other's strengths, and aren't threatened by other folks. They have a positive view of themselves, without being conceited or self-involved.



We also noticed that mature Christians do certain things as well. They Pray. They Read the Bible. They Worship. They Serve.

But which comes first? If I do the things that Christians do, will I develop the characteristics we see in mature Christians? Or do I need to practice the characteristics, and that will lead me to do things that are common among mature Christians?

And how can we help our children (and each other) to grow up in our faith?

It seems to me that it's not a straight line, not a simple cause and effect sort of thing. Perhaps it's more like a spiral.

We can teach children to pray. But better than that, we can pray along with them.

We can take children to worship. We can welcome them into our midst, helping them to feel a part of our community by including them in meaningful ways, by modeling what it looks like to worship.

We can read scripture to children. Or better yet, with them. We can use storytelling and role playing to help them understand and remember. We can help

children relate scripture to their lives and help them to see the connections.

We can serve, allowing the children to see what it looks like to care for others. We can create opportunities for them to serve alongside us and with us, because then they learn what it feels like to care for other people.

Because it turns out that spiritual maturity is a journey – not a destination. We all are on the same path, and sometimes we're pretty far down the road, and sometimes not so much. Perhaps Jesus himself is the most mature Christian we can think of.

But the more we do the things that mature Christians do, the more we display the characteristics we listed above. And the more like that we become, the more we want to do the things that Christians do. The more we mature, the more we grow up in our faith, the more we become like Christ.

Robin

Calling All Third and Fourth Graders
“Walking through the Lord’s
Prayer” Workshop



Wednesdays, January 7 – 28
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Room 238

Did you ever wonder about the Lord’s Prayer? Do you know who gave us the Lord’s Prayer? Do you know what the words mean and why the congregation prays this in church? Then this workshop is just for YOU!

Come join us to find out the answers to these questions and much more as we walk through the Lord’s Prayer every Wednesday beginning January 7 through January 28 in Room 238, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

As part of the Wednesday Evenings at Westminster, everyone is invited to share a quick meal in Fellowship Hall from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. After dinner, we will meet in Room 238 to begin our walk.

Don’t forget your Bibles!

Hope to see you on January 7!

Please RSVP to Tracey Mattes, mattes@westminster-church.org.

Baptisms

August 24

Savanna Faith

Parents: Alysha & James Meier

September 14

Eliza Rose

Parents: Elizabeth & William Baker

October 5

Eleanor & Daniel

Parents: Melanie Hallums & Joshua Shanholtzer

Andrew Gerain

Parents: Amelia Golia & Craig King Jr.

November 16

Aubrey Kathryn

Parents: Katie & Brian Heitman

Jordan Scott

Parents: Heather & Jeff James

Preston Louis

Parents: Lindsay & Sean Kelley

Elias

Parents: Anne & Spencer Ritchey

Lucinda Louise

Parents: Kati & Joseph Viviano

Listen for the Silence

He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.

1 Kings 19:11-12, NRSV

Poor Elijah, sitting alone in a cave in the wilderness waiting to die. He had just, with God's spectacular help, defeated the prophets of Baal. In so doing he had really annoyed Queen Jezebel to the point that she put a contract on his life. She wanted Elijah dead. Not feeling that he was quite ready to die, at least not in the ways Jezebel may have had in mind, Elijah decided to flee. That's why he is sitting all by himself in that cave in the middle of nowhere. He figured that it was better to just wait until his time to die than to have angry Jezebel hasten his end in dastardly ways.



God wasn't quite ready for Elijah's last chapters to be written while he was cowering in a cave on a hillside. So, an angel told Elijah to get out of the cave and to wait for God to come for a chat. Elijah waited. A strong wind kicked up and got Elijah's attention. Certainly this was God announcing his entrance! Nope...not yet. Then an earthquake and then a fire, but still no God. Elijah must have wondered what in the world God was up to. After all, God had appeared in a pretty dramatic way to allow Elijah to defeat Baal's prophets. Certainly, he thought, this was how the God of power and creation liked to show up: with lots of drama and glitz and attention-getting special effects. Was he ever surprised! "The sound of sheer silence" followed all of the glitzy effects of wind, earthquake, and fire – and *now* God had arrived to talk to Elijah. How wonderful are those words, "the *sound* of sheer silence." When God finally came to Elijah *in silence*, it was such a contrast to what Elijah was expecting that it got his attention like no other sound could.

We are on the threshold of a new year and uncertainty beckons us. We don't know what tomorrow holds, let alone next month or the end of the year. And the uncertainty can be if not frightening, at least unsettling. What will happen in our economy and how will it affect my life and the lives of those whom I love? How will my health fare over these next months? Will my children remain safe in their schools and with their friends and in our neighborhoods? Will war and the threat

of terrorism ever end? Are there crises ahead or smooth sailing?

Uncertainty...not knowing about the future: that was Elijah's lot. And for a while he was trapped, victimized by that uncertainty. When God appeared, Elijah was cowering in a cave, paralyzed by fear of the future, and expecting God to show him the way in a powerful, glitzy demonstration. Aren't we often the same? The uncertainty of the future is unsettling. We long for God to deliver us. The problem is that we often wait, like Elijah, for the powerful, glitzy demonstrations of God's presence and conclude that God isn't around when they don't happen.

Let's join in making just one New Year's Resolution: to resolve to look for God to come to us in all of life – including the "sound of sheer silence." If we do, we won't find uncertainty eliminated, nor the often accompanying fear and anxiety. We will find a God who has been there all along and is still speaking to us – just in quiet, subtle ways. God came to Elijah in the "sound of sheer silence" and gave him the courage to leave his cave. Listen for the silence...God is there.

Shalom,

Dave



*The King will reply,
"Truly I tell you,
whatever you did for
one of the least of these
brothers and sisters of
mine, you did for me."*

Matthew 25:4

The Selfish Giant

I've always liked short stories. These brief narratives can deliver powerful messages with an economy of language, and that requires clarity of thought and mastery of words. Recently, while searching through some old books, I found one I enjoyed reading as a child: Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. There is one story in particular that, with fantastic simplicity, portrays how love can transform our souls and redeem us, even when we don't seem worthy of love's investment in us.

"The Selfish Giant" is the children's tale of a giant with a beautiful garden. The giant is away for a few years and, at his return, he discovers the local children playing in his garden, laughing and happy. This makes the giant furious, so he chases the children away and tells them to never return. And to ensure that that would happen, he builds a wall around the garden and puts up a sign saying, "Trespassers will be prosecuted." The garden is all to himself now, and he becomes trapped in his own selfishness and loneliness. The garden misses the children and becomes dormant. Spring doesn't want to come to such a sad place, so the garden lives in an unending winter: trees die, the ground is covered in snow, a cold wind blows all the time, the flowers are gone, and where once the sound of laughter rang is now frozen silence. The seasons change all around it, but the giant's garden remains always in winter.

Then, one day, the giant hears the melody of a bird singing. He goes to the window and sees that the children are playing in his garden again; they had

crept in through a gap in the wall. The garden is in full bloom and under a warm light. The giant is filled with happiness at such a joyful view and says, "How selfish I have been! I will knock down the walls and let the children play here forever." He is indeed very sorry. The giant goes down to the garden, but when the children see him, they run away in fear. Only one child stays. This little boy had tried to climb a tree, but he is so small that he couldn't. He is crying, his eyes so full of tears that he doesn't see the giant coming. But the giant approaches him, holds him tenderly in his hand and puts him up in the tree. The child smiles and kisses him, and the other children seeing the scene understand that the giant has changed, and they all come back. From then on the children play in the giant's garden for years, and the giant enjoys sharing his garden with them. The little child who kissed the giant disappears, and the giant remembers him tenderly and longs to see him again.

With the sweetness of a children's story, Wilde's tale breaks down our defenses. We get so involved in the rhythm and simplicity of the tale, that by the time we realize we can be the selfish giant, we are too far gone to deny it. We are forced to think of our own "selfish giant" moments and to question ourselves. Are we aware of the times when we choose the cold, lonely winter just to have the garden all to ourselves? Are we conscious of all the "do not trespass" messages our hearts put out to others? Do we realize how we shield ourselves from joy by not letting

others into our world? Are we humble enough to leave our giant's ways and say, "How selfish I've been!?" And upon the realization, do we knock down the walls of selfishness and let generosity flow from our hearts? Do we see the little child in need in the garden of our lives and hold him up with tenderness?

Are you wondering how the story ends? One cold winter day many years later, the giant sees one little side of his garden in full bloom and in a bright light. The giant is now very old and feeble, so he slowly gets down to the garden. When he arrives, he sees the little child he once helped, and whom he had loved so much ever since, but had never seen again. He is filled with joy for the encounter, but is soon angered when he realizes the boy is hurt; he has the cuts of nails in his hands and feet.

'Who hath dared to wound thee?' cried the Giant; 'tell me, that I may take my big sword and slay him.'

'Nay!' answered the child; 'but these are the wounds of Love.'

'Who art thou?' said the Giant, and a strange awe fell on him, and he knelt before the little child.

And the child smiled on the Giant, and said to him, 'You let me play once in your garden, today you shall come with me to my garden, which is Paradise.'

— Mariela Antunes

Back from Guatemala



The medical mission team returned from Guatemala with empty suitcases and hearts filled with love for the indigenous Mayans that we served. The team left Pittsburgh on November 1, 2014, taking suitcases filled with medications. Thank you to all who helped fill those suitcases by donating over-the-counter drugs or money to help with the cost of prescription medications.

The team – Harry Serene, Barb Allwes, Debby & Jeff Underwood, Ann & Jonna Munroe, Pat Jenkins, Taylor Jones, and Nancy Elliott – were very much in demand in San Juan La Laguna, Palestina, and San Pablo. About 50 patients a day were seen in each of those locations. The cost to be seen was \$1.50 and that included any needed medications. It was free to those unable to pay. Men, women, and children waited patiently to be treated for a wide variety of problems. We were able to help most of them with medicine or referrals to nearby treatment centers.

ODIM Guatemala (Organization for the Development of Indigenous Mayans), the Methodist volunteer in mission organization through which we volunteered, operates two medical clinics, a dental clinic, programs to fight infant malnutrition, and a diabetes health education program. Forty-four local Mayans staff the clinic and

serve the community between visits from volunteer medical teams. Our team was the first since June, so they were very happy to see us! We were assisted by local translators, many of whom became a part of our team and educated us about the lives, customs, and hardships of the people we served.

The weather was great in this lakeside community at 6,000 feet above sea level. We had beautiful views, a nice place to stay, and were well fed. We were blessed!

— Debby Underwood

Help the Haiti Mission Library Grow



You are invited to help the book collection continue to grow for the library at the mission in La Croix, Haiti. Books will be delivered via Westminster's trip in late February. It is exciting to share that part of the focus of this trip is to build the second room of the library. There is great excitement for this project with our brothers and sisters in Haiti. You may help this endeavor by praying for the project and/or purchasing a book via the Amazon wish list. Questions may be directed to Jenny Gallo, 412-480-4193 or jlj@pobox.com.

- Go to www.amazon.com
- Click on "Wish List" in the upper right corner
- In the find a wish list search engine box, type "Jenny Gallo"
- Choose "New Testament Mission, Haiti"
- Enjoy ordering any books on the list, which has been carefully crafted for this particular library!

VOLUNTEERS AMONG US



In 2013, over 900 people volunteered in and around our church, community, and abroad. What fantastic things are these people doing? How do we let everyone know? How do we encourage more people to participate if they want to, perhaps by just hearing what others are doing? With this in mind, Westminster's volunteer coordinator approached me with an exciting opportunity to write monthly

Spire articles highlighting our members and their volunteer efforts.

Dave and Bev Hilty, longtime Westminster members, are enthusiastic and active volunteers. Their philosophy is if they "see a need" they are willing to step in and help out. Almost 15 years ago, the leadership for communion preparation was changing and at that time Dave was chair of the worship committee. He found that communion preparation involves specific steps and setup. Together, Dave and Bev began organizing monthly teams to prepare all the communion elements. Bev thought she would like to try baking the bread. She truly enjoys helping the church and likes to contribute behind the scenes. To this day the Hiltys are still leading communion preparation and, using special tools, Bev enjoys making the communion wafers every month.

Dave is an active part of the weekly Thursday Morning Men's Group that does so much around the church. They do many construction projects that are

wonderful additions to our facility, such as new shelving for the bell choir's storage room and renovations in the WROC fitness room. Dave has made many new friends by being part of this group and he enjoys their fellowship together.

Bev has been a library helper, Chancel Guild member, and receptionist at Westminster's front desk. Dave has helped at the food bank and been a part of the Bethel Park Community Foundation. They both agree that being part of these groups and others is fun and provides great satisfaction in doing something that is needed. How would Dave and Bev encourage others to help out and volunteer? "It's easy, piece of cake!"

– Kris Overstreet

Legacies

Westminster... With Appreciation thanks all who have supported the endowment and special gifts of the church during the year between December 1, 2013, and November 30, 2014.

Gifts to the Endowment Fund are invested toward the future of Westminster by funding major improvements to the church not covered by annual giving as well as various ministry and mission initiatives proposed and evaluated by session and the endowment committee. While projects can be considered at any time during the year, funding set aside according to the value of the fund on December 31 of each calendar year is available beginning in March for consideration for various needs. Any member of Westminster may present documentation for funding requests according to a process approved by the church. These requests are reviewed and studied by the endowment committee in March, and if all funding is not distributed,

further requests later in the year may be considered.

Westminster often has needs that cannot be met directly from endowment funding. Fortunately, these needs can sometimes be met through the generosity of individuals through the special gifts arm of the endowment. During the past few years, donors have restored Galbreath Chapel and funded the soon to be installed Taylor and Boody chapel organ. The grand piano for the chapel was a gift presented by the family of a recently deceased member. Improvements to the columbarium area were also a special gift.

Additional money has been designated for Music and Arts, a special fund of the endowment, a fund that has grown significantly during the past few years. Music and Arts is an example of funding that enriches not only the congregation but the entire Pittsburgh area through its programming.

It must be emphasized, however, that

the undesignated fund is the money that keeps growing through investment to extend the mission and ministry of Westminster in perpetuity. The endowment committee is grateful to those members and friends who contribute to this fund on a regular basis or who have remembered the endowment in their wills.

The following persons have been memorialized by gifts to the endowment during the 12-month period ending December 1, 2014: Robert Brown, Jack Green, David Kinsey, Bud Knable, Alice Kramer, Franklin Lersch, Betty Lubic, Keith Melton, Kennard Malli, Sue Monsour, Constance Quaintance, Gregg Schwotzer, Donald Vance, and Eugenia Wilson.

Gifts of any amount are gratefully received. Please direct contributions for the endowment to the attention of Dave Reiter. Questions may be directed to any member of the Westminster Endowment Committee.

WROC 2015

What's New for the New Year!

PILATES

Pilates uses a variety of controlled movements designed to create long, sculpted muscles, tone the core, and increase flexibility. Learn fundamentals, proper technique, and a sensible progression of Pilate exercises in this workout. Intensity can be increased over time as the body conditions and adapts to the exercises. Most of this workout is conducted while lying down. No experience needed.

Mondays and Thursdays: 9:45 – 10:45 a.m. with instructor Gailya Woodyard

FLOW (VINYASA) YOGA Evening Class

Class focuses on body awareness while stretching, breathing, building balance and strength using a smooth flow format. Modifications will be given to support pose positions. This class is appropriate for all fitness levels. Please bring a mat to class.

Tuesdays: 6:45 – 7:45 p.m. with instructor Deb White

FAMILY FITNESS FRENZY

Looking to get your family moving this winter? The Family Fitness program is designed to build family relationships and encourage fitness. Families will rotate through a variety of fun stations that will keep you moving and enhance coordination, strength, endurance, and gross motor skills. Each 10 to 15 minute rotation will include fun games using jump ropes, hula hoops, Twister, and badminton. Additional equipment such as exercise bands and balls, agility ladders, and aerobic steps will be incorporated. Activities will be done as a family, in small groups, and as an entire class.

One adult (age 18 or older) must accompany each family. Children must be age five or older to participate.

Thursdays, March 5 – April 16, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. with instructor Gailya Woodyard

Li'l WROCers

INTRODUCTION TO BALLET AND JAZZ: Incorporating Faith and Dance!

(Ages 3 through 5)

Children will celebrate God's love for them while learning basic ballet technique. Kids will leap, jump, turn, and smile for God's love!

Participants will receive 30 minutes of introduction to ballet, which consists of short ballet barre, stretching, and beginner ballet steps. Each class will also offer 15 minutes of jazz instruction, which includes a warm-up and fun center floor and across the floor dance combinations. At the end of each class, children will hear and explore a short Bible verse that relates to class.

Saturdays, January 10 – March 7, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. with instructor Kiera Pyles



Visit our website at wroc.westminster-church.org for registration information and a complete listing of our programs.

WROC TALK

OVERCOMING OVEREATING: Finding Peace with Food

Nobody wants to be out of control with food, yet most of us are too much of the time. We can't resist overeating even as we don't like ourselves for doing it. This makes no sense until you look at how our systems are designed, which is for a world we left behind just a couple of generations ago. Understanding how this works is essential for taking back control of your life once and for all.

The talk will focus on these key areas:

- 1. How we got here:** The various social shifts and unintended consequences that have created an epidemic of overeating unmatched in human history.
- 2. Why we keep overeating when we really don't want to:** The built-in drives and environmental pressures that compel us to continue this unwanted and harmful behavior.
- 3. Why weight control is so hard:** Physical and psychological factors that make it harder than you might expect. Understanding these factors is essential to supporting your long-term success.
- 4. Doing what works:** Proven strategies for lifelong mastery and quality resources for continuing self-education.

Join Elizabeth Babcock, LCSW on Wednesday, January 28, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Christ United Methodist Church.

This presentation is a joint effort between Westminster Presbyterian Church and Christ United Methodist Church.



PNC Park by Bob Hayes

Bob Hayes' Photography

On Display through mid-February

The photography of Bob Hayes will be displayed in the Gallery at Westminster through mid-February. Although he is well known for sport and wedding photography, as well as fine art nature and landscapes, Bob's current exhibit concentrates on Pittsburgh scenes and images from Aruba and other Mid-Atlantic regions.

Photography, to Bob, is about "producing exceptional images that stir emotion in the viewer." His photo of PNC Park from the river captures the spirit of baseball. The viewer becomes part of the pictured crowd, and the cheers and chants and familiar cadences all come back at a glance.

Feller's Garage is another image that will "stir emotion in the viewer" because everyone has memories of a "Feller's Garage" – the name, business, or time frame is not important. Bob says his association with his church has helped him develop a peace with his landscape photography and allows him to be "highly creative with capturing unusual vantage points" in his work.

Hayes uses a Nikon D3 Digital camera. He searches for "moments where an image establishes itself as a defining piece of art," and his goal is to capture those unique moments and make them more visually appealing. Bob says that when an image presents itself, his mind

**He searches for
"moments where an
image establishes itself
as a defining piece of art."**

"immediately evaluates the quality of light (early morning and late afternoon light is important), along with proper and unique composition, and unusual angles." Then, as he produces his images for presentation, he uses post-processing treatments "to further enhance and make the images stronger." This can be seen in Bob's photo of the cats – the small family pet taking in the image of the "King of the Jungle."

Bob says he has always been an extremely dedicated, highly-motivated person, and he feels that his work as a photographer demands such a "high degree of persistence and patience in order to produce one-of-a-kind images." He attributes the development of his lighting techniques to early professional portrait lighting workshops with Jerry Interval.

A member and three-year president of the photography section of the Academy of Science and Art of Pittsburgh, Hayes has received many awards with his exceptional images. His photos are displayed in offices and business establishments throughout the Pittsburgh area, including the local StonePepper's Grill, Mt. Lebanon Shops, and the Galleria offices. His images may be viewed at www.bobhayesphoto.photorelect.com.

– Betty Digby

Gated Communities of Health



Headlines last year about us and them and Ebola shined a spotlight on the gated communities of health where we live. Stark disparities in health are a fact of life around the world and, to a shocking extent, even in the U.S. Just a few miles of difference in your address can mean 20 years of difference in your life expectancy.

When Thomas Eric Duncan showed up, infected with the Ebola virus, at an emergency room in Dallas, he was definitely not the first poor, uninsured person to be turned away when he should not have been. But his case vividly illustrates the fact that harsh disparities eventually come around to hurt everyone. Turning him away put many more people at risk for spreading infection with the Ebola virus before Duncan returned for the treatment he needed in the first place.

Much of the world's response to Ebola has been remarkable. Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) quickly formed the front line for addressing the epidemic in West Africa. Healthcare professionals from all over the world have walked away from regular

There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried.

Luke 16:19-22

jobs at home to put their own lives at risk serving people so severely affected.

The U.S. response to the Ebola epidemic has been more of a mixed picture. After a bit of a slow start, we went through a panic with the realization that this epidemic might cross our borders and become a threat that we could not ignore.

Taking temperatures at U.S. airports did serve to calm a few people. But how different is it from taking off our shoes to prevent terrorism? Natural human instinct is to protect ourselves. To recognize a threat, we draw a line between "us" and "them." And this is where health-related bias and stigma starts. "They" must have done something to bring misfortune onto themselves. We start to lock ourselves into gated communities of health.

The harm spreads regardless. An infectious plague that is not addressed at its source will spread. Even noncommunicable diseases – like obesity and its complications – exact a toll on families, children, economic vitality, and even national security.

We have now come around to mobilize resources in West Africa and help the slow process of bringing the human tragedy under control there. This response speaks to the Christian character of our culture. The imperative to love and care for our neighbor is something we cannot ultimately deny

without denying the sacrifice that Christ has made for us.

No matter how securely we lock the gates of our healthy communities, every time someone suffers needlessly, all of us will come to feel the harm.

– Ted Kyle

Session Update

On December 15, Session adopted a balanced budget for 2015 consistent with contributions anticipated on the basis of members' pledges and other gifts. A summary of the budget will appear in the annual report and copies of the details will be available in January.

Session also continued the discussion about same-sex marriage, which the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) last June permitted but did not require pastors to perform. Plans were begun to provide opportunities for the congregation to discuss the matter in various settings beginning this winter.

Financial Report

As of November 30, 2014

General Fund Contributions

Year-to-Date Actual	\$ 1,731,766.26
Annual Budget	\$ 1,987,695.00
Amount needed to fulfill budget	\$ 255,928.74

Year-to-Date Income Statement

Income	\$ 2,025,172.58
Expenses	\$ 2,024,564.83
Net Position	\$ 607.75

We thank you for your wonderful support through the first eleven 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 12.9% of our 2014 budgeted contributions yet to be fulfilled.

If you are current or ahead on your 2014 pledge, thank you for your continuing support. If you are behind on your 2014 pledge, we ask that you would consider catching up and fulfilling your pledge before December 31, so that we can continue to meet our commitments. Thank you.

What Is Per Capita?

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

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

Please remember to forward your 2015 per capita apportionment to the Finance Office anytime after January 1, 2015. **The amount set by Pittsburgh Presbytery for 2015 is \$28.00 per member.** Each year Westminster must send the amount set for the year to the presbytery **for each active member of our church.** For those members who do not send in their per capita apportionment, we must make up the difference from our operating budget. In 2014 we had to make up approximately \$37,000 in per capita shortfall. For those of you who will be receiving offering envelopes, there is an envelope inside each box for the per capita apportionment. For those of you who have elected not to receive offering envelopes, please note “2015 Per Capita” on the memo line of your check. If you have any questions regarding this apportionment, please contact David Reiter, church business administrator, at 412-835-6630x201 or reiter@westminster-church.org. **Thank you.**

Deaths

Bernie Queneau
Dennis Petronko
Jean Daube





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“ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. ”

James 3:17