



THE SPARE

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Pittsburgh, PA

Standing Up for Truth

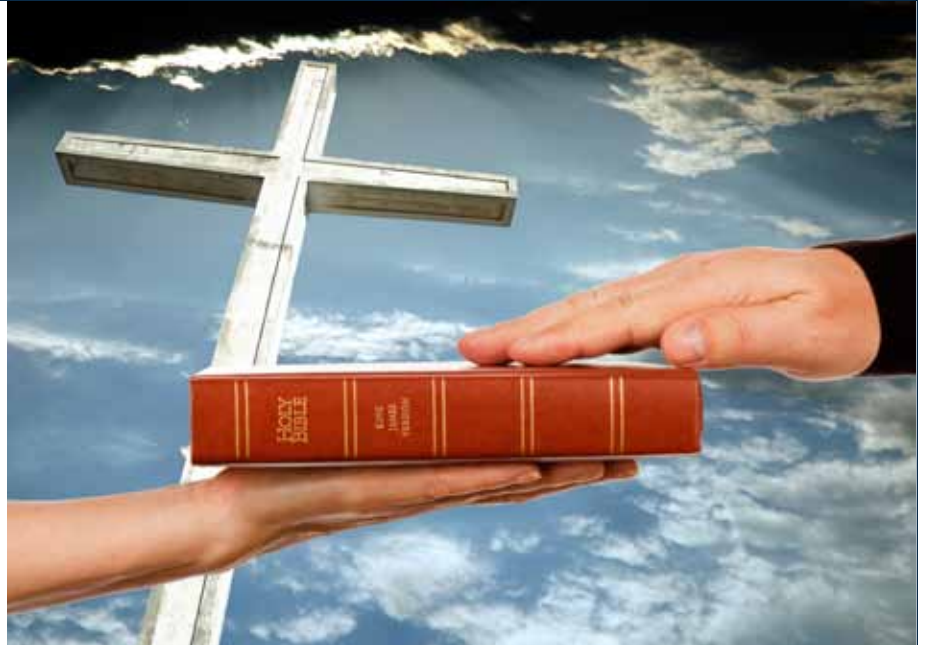
If I have a New Year's resolution this year, it will be to take a stand more boldly for the truth, and encourage others to do the same.

It's not that I haven't always been committed to truthfulness. Telling the truth is an essential part of integrity, and integrity is a core value for many of us. The problem is that people have lots of reasons to refract the truth through the lens of their particular interests, and it's so much easier to let lies and distortions go by than to confront them and call them out for what they are. We can avoid conflict by looking the other way: conflict with people we want to stay connected to, and conflict within ourselves, whenever the truth threatens something we value even more.

But Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and it's simply impossible to be a faithful follower of Christ without being fully committed to the truth. In fact, the very way he puts it suggests that the path of life is also the way of truth; and by implication, to wander from the truth is to drift away from life itself, into the direction of spiritual death.

Our culture seems to be getting sicker, and part of the reason is that so many people have wandered away from truthfulness. We see it all the time in the rank partisan hypocrisy that's become so pervasive. If a member of Party A does some reprehensible thing, the members of Party B pounce all over it with righteous indignation; but if one of their own does the very same thing, he gets a pass, while rationalizations fly fast and furiously.

One sign of just how far we've strayed from the truth is how readily people invoke the "everybody does it" defense. If any given act is wrong when someone from the other side does it,



how does their bad behavior take away the moral sting when someone from our side does the same? Morally speaking, "Everybody does it" is no defense at all, but the fact that people use it so often suggests that other things matter more to them than the truth.

We have major challenges to face, as individuals and as a nation, and denying those challenges while cultivating an aversion to truthfulness is a prescription for disaster. Anyone who has lived with alcohol or drug addiction knows that's true, and it's equally true for social challenges like race relations, economic justice and opportunity, sexual harassment, and responsible stewardship of our environment.

People have all kinds of reasons to avoid the truth, but only some combination of complacency and cowardice can be content with a culture of falsehood and evasion. Christians need to be better than that, and we will, if we truly follow the one who said, "the truth will make you free."

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Read the *Spire* online at:
www.westminster-church.org

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📅	Sundays
🕒	9:45 a.m.
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*The Lord's Supper is celebrated the first Sunday of each month.
Gluten-free wafers are available at all services.*



Epiphany: Revealing God in Christ to Humanity

The word *epiphany* (from the Greek *epiphaneia* or *theophaneia*) means “appearance” or “manifestation” of God, and has roots in the word for sunrise or dawn. In ancient times, an epiphany meant either a visible manifestation of a god or the solemn visit of a ruler venerated as a god.

For Christians, Christmas marks the coming of God to us; Epiphany celebrates the appearance of the Lord in the midst of humanity. The Christmas stories of the birth of Immanuel declare the divine entry; Epiphany extols the revelation of God to the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

In our celebrations of Christmas and Epiphany we rejoice in the dawning and the arising of Light in darkness.... Epiphany not only discloses the Savior to the world but also calls the world to show forth Christ, to be witnesses to God's true Light. The timeless mystery of the incarnation, God in flesh, leads us forth to show and tell of Christ as God's gift of grace and salvation for all persons. Some call this ongoing epiphany the work of Christmas.

— An excerpt from the *Companion to the Book of Common Worship*

Upcoming Events

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7 Baptism of
the Lord
JAN

14 Ordination and
Installation of
Officers
JAN

21 Organist
Gregory Hand
Galbreath Chapel
3:00 p.m.
JAN

28 Congregational
Meeting
JAN

WESTMINSTER SEMINARS

Sundays at 9:45 a.m.
Galbreath Chapel

JANUARY 7 & 14

We Believe

Louise Rogers

In times of crises, what is God’s call to the church? When sin disrupts the church’s unity and creates division and unjust systems that steal life from God’s creation, how should those who follow Jesus respond?

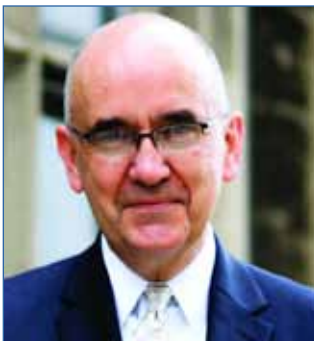
We will seek to answer these questions by digging into our core beliefs as Christians. Presbyterians are confessional Christians. We accept and use the ancient and universal creeds of the church to identify the church and to direct our actions as followers of Christ. Over these two sessions, Louise Rogers will lead a discussion to look at our confessions and examine the Confession of Belhar, the most recent confession, which comes out of South Africa.



JANUARY 21

Presbyterians Respond to Refugees

David Esterline, Christine Chakoian



David Esterline



Christine Chakoian

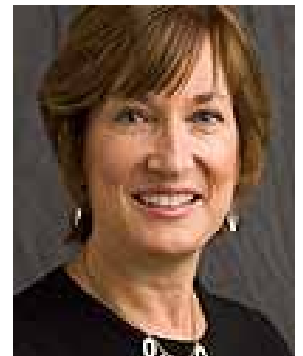
We welcome two friends from Pittsburgh Seminary to discuss ways that we as a church and denomination can respond to refugees. The Rev. Dr. David Esterline, president and professor of cross-cultural theological education, specializes in global and ecumenical theological education and educational diversity. The Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian began in November as the seminary’s vice president for advancement. She has a long history of engaging with refugees within the church context.

In December 2015, Pittsburgh Presbytery unanimously adopted “A Declaration on Welcoming Refugees,” which states that it is “committed to welcoming the stranger, the vulnerable, and, of course, Syrian refugees fleeing from their war-torn homeland.” As people of God, Presbyterians in Pittsburgh and beyond continue to respond with compassion to refugees seeking safety in the U.S. Read the declaration here: http://www.pghpresbytery.org/news/pdfs/declaration_on_welcoming_refugees.pdf.

JANUARY 28

Pope Francis and Refugees

Paula M. Kane



Paula M. Kane

Pope Francis has been outspoken in calling for a shared response to the challenges of migration and refugees in today’s world. He has urged political leaders and civil society to join the efforts of the Catholic Church to welcome and protect the most vulnerable.

We welcome Dr. Paula Kane from the University of Pittsburgh to Westminster. As a professor of religious studies and chair of contemporary Catholic studies, she works in the fields of American Catholicism, American history, popular religion, and religion and the arts.

Starting Over

Ed Sutter told me a beautiful story about a plan from his college days. The plan never quite came to fruition for his roommates, but it has stuck with me. The roommates planned to purchase a live lobster at the beginning of the school year and keep it alive in an aquarium in their apartment. Then, any time anything at all went wrong in the course of the school year, they would blame the lobster. Get a bad grade on a test? It was the lobster's fault. Get dumped by your girlfriend? She was working with the lobster. Stub your toe on the coffee table in the morning? Man, do I hate that lobster. Then, at the end of the school year, the plan was to cook the lobster and eat it, thus tasting the sweet revenge for every single thing that had gone wrong in that year.

Now again, it was an idea that never came to fruition, so no animals were harmed in the telling of this story. But it was super funny all the same. Imagine how good that lobster would taste, if you knew that it bore the brunt of all the awful things that had gone on that year!

In many quarters of the internet that I call home, there are some who kind of wish that we had a lobster for 2017. Racial tensions bubbled up to the surface of our public life again, making us question what kind of nation we are going to be. Countless media personalities and politicians from both sides of the aisle found themselves caught up in inappropriate sexual relationships and behaviors, leading to firings and resignations. Our political discourse has dissolved to the point where it feels like it ought to actually happen on an elementary school playground and not the hallowed halls of our democratic institutions. Hurricanes battered our shores in record numbers and intensity, leaving even to this day millions in Puerto Rico without power. Yes, it is true. 2017 was a bit rough on us as a nation.

I've never been the world's biggest fan of the New Year's holiday; celebrating a clock ticking past one second into the next seemed kind of arbitrary and unnecessary. Plus, I don't like being up any later than I need to be, and midnight seems so late into the night! But this year, I can get behind leaving behind 2017. I can get behind turning the page on the calendar. I can get behind moving on the list of horrible events listed above.

The beauty of the Christian faith is that we are presented with countless opportunities to press on, to repent, to move forward. The gift of grace is that we have the ability to treat each and every breath as our own private New Year's, to start over. When we don't like the way our lives are working out, Jesus gives us the grace and the opportunity to change.

There is a part two to this discussion, however. When the clock strikes midnight on January 1, 2018, there will still be racial tension in our country. There will still be people living in poverty. There will still be those who treat our public discourse the same way they treat a WWE wrestling match. There will still be those who abuse their positions of power to exploit the least fortunate,



to make unwanted sexual advances, to diminish their enemies. The world will still be covered in potential crisis and disaster.

Repentance isn't just a chance to turn away from the ugliness of our world. It is a chance to turn toward something beautiful. If we're going to start over, if we're going to hit the refresh button, then you and I have an obligation to work to make the world a better place. You and I can be a voice of reconciliation for our racially divided nation. You and I can advocate for safer work places, for better treatment of those who are on the margins of our society. You and I can engage in a healthier dialogue around our politics, a dialogue that Westminster engages in quite frequently as it turns out. And you and I can pick up hammer and nails, and start to rebuild the shattered lives of those touched by natural disasters. You and I may have witnessed the toll 2017 took on our nation, but you and I have also been given a gift by Christ to be able to make 2018 look radically different.

So count down with me if you'd like, but when the clock strikes midnight I want to be about something different this year. I want to celebrate the gift of grace that I've been given, the ability to start over whenever needed, the gift of forgiveness when I could have done better, the gift of love from God. But I am also celebrating my ability to be a part of the solution to so many of these problems. I am celebrating the fact that I worship in a place where so many are already working to make the world better in astonishingly creative ways, and are inviting me to join in.

And, I may even get some lobster for the road.

Happy New Year everyone!

– Jason Freyer



Through a bit of recent spiritual direction I realized something about my life, and my faith in particular. When it comes to a relationship with God I tend to default toward a “task” orientation. In other words, I find myself seeking out what God “wants me to do” and I have spent a lot of energy focusing on what God may or may not be calling me to do. This is all well and good, but I think I may have swung the pendulum too far in that direction. I need to get to know God again.

As it turns out, it seems as though I’ve sacrificed knowing God for wanting to *do* something. Maybe you catch the irony in that, too. How could I ever do the will of someone that I haven’t remained connected to?

As I’ve said numerous times in these articles, I have a feeling that I’m not alone in this. It all starts in an honorable place, simply wanting to serve Christ’s kingdom here on earth. But what follows, if left unchecked, can lead down a road that seeks after achievement, glory, and fame – not for Christ, but for us. Achievement of any kind is a funny thing in that way; it has a strange addicting quality to it. And as is the case with most cravings of this nature, the returns tend to diminish as we build up our “tolerance” level.

There’s a quote that you may have heard me speak about from a 20th century Rabbi named Abraham Joshua Heschel that speaks well to this topic: “Never once in my life did I ask God for success or wisdom or power or fame. I asked for wonder, and he gave it to me.” This quote has become a battle cry that I aspire to. When

I look back in my life, it’s really quite simple for me to look at God in great wonder at all of the ways that he’s worked in my life. But when it comes to looking forward, there’s a whole different story. When I’m honest, I realize that I ask God for success, wisdom, power, and fame on a fairly regular basis. I find myself wanting to *do* something, to *achieve* something.

So I’m working on it. I’m getting to know God again – not just retrospectively, but in this moment, in real time. I want to be in awe and wonder at all that God has done, but also what God *is doing* and *will do*.

Perhaps you’re interested in joining me on this little venture. Here’s what I’ve taken to doing over the past few weeks: Each day I’m reading something from scripture (there are lots of great apps and daily devotionals that can help with this) and then asking myself, “What can I learn about God from these words?” Once I come up with this answer (it’s usually just a few words like, “God shows up suddenly.”) I meditate on that thought throughout the day as a reminder to remain close to God and what *he* is doing as opposed to what *I* am doing.

We worship a truly wonderful God. It is wholly appropriate for us to be in awe of him. So as we begin this new year, let’s all draw our gaze away from our own achievements and instead focus them on knowing God.

– Ed Sutter

GLIMPSE OF MY WORLD

“We could peek....”

I had wrapped up the Children’s Moment during 11:00 worship, and already given instructions for the children to return to their seats or to join us for Sunday school. But there, so close in front of me that I could not possibly rise from my seat on the sanctuary steps without knocking him over, stood one of our four year olds. On my lap was a beautifully wrapped Christmas gift, the prop I had used for my short talk about how we can use the waiting time of Advent to help us become more excited and more ready for the arrival of our Savior. He wanted to know, “What’s in the box?” I reminded him that the tag on the gift said “Do Not Open until Christmas,” so I would have to wait to find out.

He leaned in, extra close, inviting me to join his plan. “We could peek,” he suggested.

Mindful of the picture the two of us would make if we were still sitting there when the hymn ended and worship continued, I suggested we could talk about it on our way downstairs to Sunday school. Luckily he agreed.

But while I was able to close this conversation with some comments about following the wishes of the giver of the gift and looking forward to opening it in a few weeks, it started me thinking. We humans really are impatient, aren’t we? We find it hard to wait; in all circumstances, no matter what, we want to fast forward to the end of the movie, read the last page of the book, get just a peek at what’s in the box. We want it to be our turn right now. We don’t like to wait; we are impatient.

Merriam-Webster defines the word *impatient* as “restless or short of temper especially under irritation, delay, or opposition.” In an article in *Psychology Today*, Jim Stone, a PhD specializing in Motivational Psychology and Evolutionary Ethics, suggests that impatience results when “we learn that it’s going to cost us more than we thought to reach a goal we have set for ourselves.” The cost may be measured in time, effort, money, opportunity, power/control, or distraction. Seeking ways to avoid paying those extra costs, we begin to seek shortcuts. In our impatience, we may try



to manipulate or change the situation. We look for quicker, easier ways to achieve our goals. In short, we try to peek.

How does our impatience affect our faith? Obviously, God knew we were going to struggle with patience – there are so many scripture verses that deal with this topic. But the passage that stands out to me is this one from Romans:

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us... For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed... we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. (Romans 8:18-25 NIV)

Hope and patience are intertwined. It is our hope in God that allows us to be patient in our faith, and our patience that allows us to rest in our hope in God. If we truly believe, if we truly trust that God has good things planned for us, that he is sovereign, in control of all things (even when it doesn’t look like it), then we can relax in that hope. And maybe we can let go of our tendency toward impatience. Maybe we can resist – or not even experience – that urge to peek.

– Robin Pyles

Attention 3rd and 4th Graders!

Apostles’ Creed Workshop
Wednesdays, January 10 – 31
6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Room 238

There is a very special workshop just for you coming in January. Each time we celebrate communion, we say the Apostles’ Creed together. But, what is a creed? And where did it come from? Join us to learn about what a creed is, how we got the Apostles’ Creed, and what the words mean. Using games, music, art, activities, and snacks, you will discover what each section of the creed means.

I believe...

After attending the workshop, you will know the meaning of the words you are reciting with the congregation in church.

Have mom/dad register you with Heather Flitsch at flitsch@westminster-curch.org or 412-835-6630x225 **by Wednesday, January 3.**

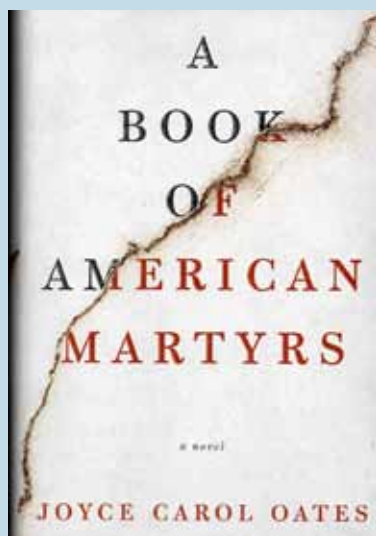
See you on Wednesday, January 10!

– Debb Egli

Westminster Book Group

Wednesday, January 31
noon – 1:15 p.m.

The Westminster Book Group will meet next on Wednesday, January 31, at noon in the Yahweh Café. We will be discussing *A Book of American Martyrs* by Joyce Carol Oates. We invite you to bring a brown bag lunch and join us.



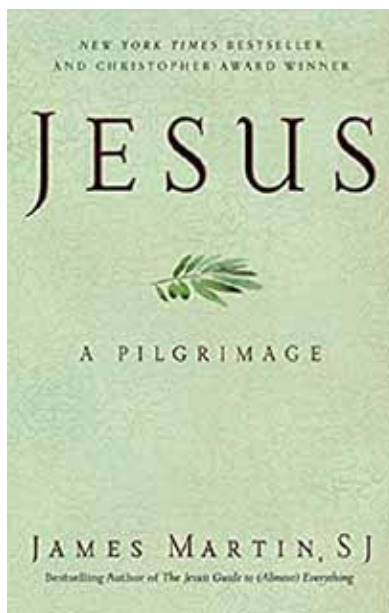
In this striking, enormously affecting novel, Joyce Carol Oates tells the story of two very different yet intimately linked American families. Luther Dunphy is an ardent Evangelical who envisions himself as acting out God's will when he assassinates an abortion provider in his small Ohio town while Augustus Voorhees, the idealistic doctor who is killed, leaves behind a wife and children scarred and embittered by grief. In her moving, insightful portrait, Joyce Carol Oates fully inhabits the perspectives of two interwoven families whose destinies are defined by their warring convictions and squarely – but with great empathy – confronts an intractable, abiding rift in American society.

A Book of American Martyrs is a stunning, timely depiction of an issue hotly debated on a national stage but that makes itself felt most lastingly in communities torn apart by violence and hatred.

– HarperCollins Publishers

Library News

Jesus: A Pilgrimage



I just finished reading the book *Jesus: A Pilgrimage* by Father James Martin, and it is so excellent that I purchased a copy for the church library before I'd finished reading it. My dad recommended it to me, and I admit that I approached this book with a bit of trepidation because of its length and my fear that it would be out of my current theological depth (as a working mom of twin toddlers, my reading list is currently comprised mainly of cozy mystery novels and picture books). I needn't have worried. It is a long book, but it is completely accessible and it held my interest through the last page. Martin states in the introduction that "this book is meant to introduce you to Jesus Christ... [It] is designed to be accessible to anyone – from those just starting to think about Jesus to those who feel that they may know the topic well."

In addition to being an author, James Martin is a Jesuit priest, spiritual director, editor at large of the Jesuit magazine *America*, and consultor to the Vatican's Secretariat for Communication. (He was also a frequent guest on *The Colbert Report* where he reflected on Christian issues with Stephen Colbert.) He writes with an honest, down to earth, and at times humorous tone. Martin says of the book: "It is a look at Jesus, as he appears in the Gospels, through the lens of my education, experience, prayer, and most recently a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. And through the lens of faith."

I've read books about Jesus of history and books about Christ of faith. I appreciate that this book explores both aspects of Jesus together, and I greatly enjoyed Martin's journey to the Holy Land (with a witty fellow Jesuit priest) where he explored the places where Jesus lived and ministered. As Martin shares his travels, he also shares his reflections and spiritual insights. He rightly points out that "traveling through the Holy Land is like visiting the family home of a good friend. No matter how well you know the person, you'll understand your friend better afterward."

This book is an interesting, thought-provoking, and enjoyable read. It sparked reflection and prayer for me, and conversation with my dad and husband. I feel I know Jesus a bit better after reading it. Of course, I hope to spend the rest of my life continuing to know him better, and I still can't quite wrap my mind around his coexisting humanity and divinity. Martin says of this, "but although Jesus's identity as the fully human Son of God remains a mystery, it is a beautiful mystery, the most beautiful one I know, and well worth pondering." Continue pondering this beautiful mystery by checking out *Jesus: A Pilgrimage* from our library.

– Sarah Fetterman-Freyer

Rise Against Hunger

(Previously known as Stop Hunger Now)

815 million people in the world don't get the food they need to live a healthy life.

– 2017 FAO Stats

Malnutrition in all its forms – from wasting to obesity – directly affects one in three people.

– 2016 Global Nutrition Report

66 million primary school-age children attend classes hungry across the developing world.

– World Food Programme

These are staggering statistics, but how can we help? Hunger affects so many people worldwide. How can we make a difference living here in the South Hills of Pittsburgh? Our lives are full, we already have people depending on us for the things we do, and we have limited resources. When I feel overwhelmed, I like reading Mother Teresa's quote, "If you can't feed a 100 people, then feed just one."

If we work together as a church family, we can feed many more than one child, many more than 100 children. Please consider volunteering on **Saturday morning, February 10**, here at Westminster.



Saturday, February 10

I encourage you to check out the Rise Against Hunger website. In addition to information about the organization, you will find stories there about the people this program helps, like a 62 year old woman named Santa living in a poverty stricken area of the Dominican Republic. She takes care of her father, two daughters, and four grandsons. Santa has seen how the Rise Against Hunger meals have improved the health of her grandsons. They are growing bigger and stronger and are sick less often. Because of this, they are able to focus on school, which is the key to improving their economic situation.

Volunteer information will be coming soon. We will need 325 volunteers to staff the assembly-line shifts for this one day. Please invite friends, neighbors, and co-workers to join you. Together we can make a difference.

– Jan Baumann

Giving Gala Exceeds All Expectations

On Saturday, October 21, 2017, the Westminster Deacons hosted their second annual Giving Gala at St. Clair Country Club. The gala raised \$56,000 to benefit the City Mission in Washington, PA. It was a fun-filled evening where we gathered with friends and family to enjoy fellowship, while supporting this worthy cause. A gourmet meal was enjoyed by all, followed by a poignant interview with a young woman whose life was saved by becoming a part of City Mission.

We then held our live auction, where we became acquainted with paddles for bidding on some amazing prizes! Some folks were fortunate enough to win Penguin tickets, while others went home with beautiful designer purses. Two people won dream vacations, one to Michigan's Upper Peninsula and one to Hilton Head Island. Thirty magnificent baskets were raffled and happily received.

Our most generous corporate sponsorships well exceeded our expectations. However, the best gift that any of us left with is the knowledge that we positively affected the lives of others in need. We are grateful to the Lord who gave us the tenacity to put this event together. The deacons also thank each and every one of you for your support.

– Andrée Jeffrey

*Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you,
"Open your hand to the poor and the needy neighbor in your land."*

Deuteronomy 15:11

How Can Christian Action Contribute to Eradicating Poverty?

The beginning of a new year often stimulates thinking of resolutions or goals for the year. Christmas, family gatherings, good food, and the many blessings experienced from Thanksgiving through the end of the year are in the rear mirror in January. We are now concentrated on goals or plans for the new year, most oriented to ourselves or close family. Moving our focus outward, how can we act to address growing poverty in our area and the country?

Nearly 50 million impoverished people live in the United States, according to the 2016 federal definition of poverty. That means that 15% or so of the people in America don't have enough money for basic things like food, clothing, and shelter – 15 out of every 100 people.

We can be numbed by such large numbers. When confronted with this information, how do we see our responsibility as citizens to address such poverty? What does God expect of us?

Now, thankfully, you belong to Westminster where many actions, great and small, are taken yearly to address poverty. Our church is not standing on the sidelines nor is most of our congregation. Here's a sample from 2017 of some significant actions of Westminster's work:

1. We collected specific gifts for 190 foster children and families (by coordinating with case managers from the Bair Foundation to ensure needed and requested items went to foster children on Christmas). Last year's gifts to children were estimated to be around \$18,000.
2. Deacons organized and conducted a fun, joyful, and effective fundraiser for City Mission that raised over \$50,000 to assist the homeless support services provided by City Mission in Washington, PA.
3. Youth group parents and teens canvassed Upper St. Clair and collected 1,700+ pounds of food for SHIM's food pantry.

4. Westminster's Outreach Commission used congregation funds to support local organizations that serve the poor or those with current life struggles: SHIM, Center for Victims, City Mission, Jubilee Food Kitchen, Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank, Presbytery's Lazarus Fund, Meals on Wheels, Family Promise, Open Hand Ministries, and others.
5. Westminster provided 35-45 volunteers at three Food Bank Produce to People food distributions last year. These distributions served on average around 500 individuals and their families at an elementary school on the North Side.
6. Sales from two rummage sales conducted by the Presbyterian Women of Westminster collected over \$20,000, which is donated to mission activities, many addressing poverty.
7. We supported many mission initiatives in Haiti, Malawi, and India, and assisted the Friends of Haiti in fundraising for educational programs.

As individuals, Westminster members engage in volunteer work for both local and international groups – as board members of agencies or in planning and capacity building activities for groups that aid the poor or needy. Members also purchase items for food drives and back-to-school supplies to donate to SHIM. We are an active church.

Westminster Church has so many individuals blessed with richly diverse skills, talents, and resources. We can with other Christians make significant strides to improve the lives of people in poverty. Because Christ is in us, we can do even more.

The path forward this year can be simple and practical, despite the enormous ramifications of poverty. We have been blessed by God to overcome the challenges of the world, especially if we follow John Wesley's words below. They can help simplify our goals for 2018.

– Will Hignett

Do all the *good* you can, by all the *means* you can,
in all the *ways* you can, in all the *places* you can,
at all the *times* you can, to all the *people* you can,
as long as ever you can.

Book Discussion with Pastor Louise Rogers

Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers

by Anne Lamott

Fridays, January 26 – February 16

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Room 231

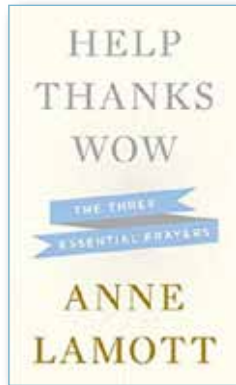
Cost: \$12

How should we pray? Author Anne Lamott writes about three simple prayers essential to coming through tough times, difficult days, and the hardships of daily life.

It is these three prayers – asking for assistance from God, appreciating what we have that is good, and feeling awe at the world around us – that can get us through the day and can show us the way forward.

In *Help, Thanks, Wow*, Lamott recounts how she came to these insights, explains what they mean to her and how others can be helped too. Join Louise as she guides you through a four-week journey focused on prayer.

Visit wroc.westminster-church.org or contact Kathy Long at 412-835-6630 to register.



Dave Ramsey's

Financial Peace University

You can take control of your money, get out of debt, and create a plan for your future. Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University is designed to teach you and your family how to get out of debt, stay out of debt, and build wealth. You'll meet with your class each week to watch the video lesson and participate in discussion and accountability groups that will change your whole attitude about money.

Register at wroc.westminster-church.org.

Mondays, January 15 – March 12

7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Room 257

Cost: \$93 includes Financial Peace Membership Kit



Registration for the WROC winter fitness programs is underway!

All classes begin the week of January 2. In addition to old favorites, we're offering two new classes this winter:

Quick Cardio

This 30-minute "all cardio" aerobics class will get your heart rate up and burn fat. This is a high energy workout that combines both high and low intensity movements. This workout is adaptable to all fitness levels (from beginner to advanced).

Tuesdays

6:15 – 6:45 p.m.

and

Saturdays

7:30 – 8:00 a.m.

Piloxing

Piloxing is a 60-minute, high-intensity exercise that combines boxing, Pilates, and dance to burn maximum calories, build lean muscles, and increase stamina. The workout blends the power, speed, and agility of boxing with the targeted sculpting and flexibility of Pilates. This workout is adaptable to all fitness levels (from beginner to advanced).

Wednesdays: 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Check out our website at wroc.westminster-church.org for registration and a complete list of programs.

WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Music
& Arts Series

Organist Gregory S. Hand

Sunday, January 21

3:00 p.m.

Galbreath Chapel

The next concert in Westminster's Music & Arts Series features organist Gregory S. Hand. On a cold Sunday afternoon in January, enjoy the warmth of organ music in the inviting space of Westminster's chapel.

The acoustics of Galbreath Chapel are ideal for music, from the quiet and gentle to the full and grand. Gregory Hand will display this range on the beautiful Taylor and Booday mechanical action organ, installed in 2015. The program includes works by Bach, Widor, Liszt, Froberger, and S.S. Wesley.

Hand is associate professor of organ at the University of Iowa. He earned the Doctorate of Musical Arts degree from the University of Michigan and has given recitals and masterclasses in the United States, France, Spain, Germany, and Brazil.

A freewill offering will be gratefully accepted.



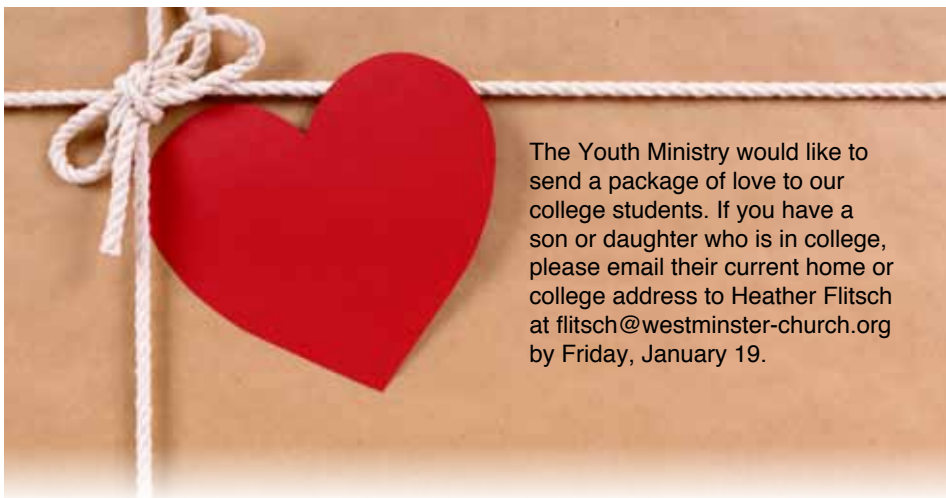
Music



Extended Communion

Five times each year, extended communion is offered to people who can't get to church. Perhaps you or a family member has been ill, had recent surgery or hospitalization. Maybe age or current physical condition makes it difficult to get to church, especially in winter months. A pair of deacons or elders will take the elements to your home or nursing facility. We will say prayers together, and then share communion. It is a very rewarding experience for the servers and recipients alike. The next date for extended communion is February 3. If you know of anyone who would benefit from this worthwhile mission, please contact Louise Rogers.

Package of Love for College Students



The Youth Ministry would like to send a package of love to our college students. If you have a son or daughter who is in college, please email their current home or college address to Heather Flitsch at flitsch@westminster-church.org by Friday, January 19.

Deaths

Randolph Fowler

November 24



Baptisms

September 17

Avery Grace
 Parents:
 Dominique & Andrew Schuster

October 15

Samantha Heather
 Parents:
 Heather & Kyle Glenn

Lincoln James
 Parents:
 Lauren Smith & Jon Kramer

November 12

Stella Suzanne
 Parents:
 Brittany & Wes Harshbarger

Peyton Knox
 Parents:
 Jennifer & David Wolf

Cooper Reid
 Parents:
 Beth & Adam Waychoff

Victoria Frances
 Parents:
 Allison & Jared Stutzman

Hudson Edward
 Parents:
 Abigail & Matthew Zidik

Baptism of the Lord

Why Do We Remember Jesus' Baptism in January?

The church calendar lists "Baptism of the Lord" on the Sunday after Epiphany, January 6. What a jump from the baby Jesus to the adult Jesus! Why do we celebrate Jesus' baptism at this time? The answer connects with the revealing of God in Christ when the Magi visited the infant Christ. In church tradition the next major step is to observe Christ's ministry, which began with his baptism by John the Baptist. Mark 1:9-11 tells the story:

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.'

As we remember Jesus' baptism, we celebrate our own: the baptism we share with Christ. The *Companion to the Book of Common Worship* explains how our baptism is rooted in Christ: "Baptism joins us to Christ and his church, and with all of the baptized we are called to share in Jesus' ministry. In the waters of baptism we are buried with Christ, cleansed of our sins, and raised to share in his resurrection. The Spirit is given to us and we are declared the children of God." That is a powerful charge to us to be faithful followers of Christ. And it is a welcome message at the beginning of a new year.

Jesus' baptism also foreshadows the 40 days of Lent because immediately after his baptism, Jesus was driven into the wilderness for 40 days before beginning his ministry in Galilee. Consider these dark days of winter an especially appropriate time to read and pray about Jesus' transforming work on earth in preparation for the season of Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 14.



Financial Report *As of November 30, 2017*

General Fund Contributions	
Year-to-Date Actual 2017	\$1,711,102.31
Annual Budget	\$1,995,623.00
Amount needed to fulfill budget	\$284,520.69

Year-to-Date Income Statement	
Income	\$2,006,263.05
Expenses	\$2,002,712.25
Net Position	\$3,550.80

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 14.3% of our 2017 budgeted contributions yet to be fulfilled.

If you are current or ahead on your 2017 pledge, thank you for your continuing support. If you are behind on your 2017 pledge, we ask that you would consider catching up and fulfilling your pledge, so that we can continue to meet our commitments. Thank you.

2018 Stewardship Campaign Update *As of December 13, 2017*

	2018	2017
Number of pledges received	381	471
Amount pledged	\$1,459,703	\$1,695,120

The 2018 Stewardship campaign is underway, and we thank you for your pledge for 2018. We have received pledges for 2018 from about 75% of those who pledged for 2017. If you have yet to make your 2018 pledge, you may do so by placing it in the offering plate today, or by mailing it to the Finance Office at the church, or by going online at www.westminster-church.org/give. The 2018 Stewardship campaign pledge cards are available in the pew racks and in the brochure racks around the church. Thank you.

Columbarium Price Increase

The price of columbarium receptacles will increase from \$1,500 each to \$1,750 each, effective May 1, 2018. Members who enter into an agreement to purchase a receptacle(s) before May 1, 2018, will receive the \$1,500 per niche price. Payment plans are available. If you are interested in purchasing a receptacle(s), contact Peg Kinsey at 412-835-6630x211.

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 2018 per capita apportionment to the Finance Office anytime after January 1, 2018.

The amount set by Pittsburgh Presbytery for 2018 is \$33.00 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 2017 we had to make up approximately \$44,000 in per capita shortfall. For those of you 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 “2018 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.**



**WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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

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www.facebook.com/Westminster.Pittsburgh



www.youtube.com/user/WestminsterUSC

*Great God, we sing that mighty hand by which supported still we stand;
The opening year your mercy shows; that mercy crowns it till it close.
With grateful hearts the past we own; the future, all to us unknown,
We to your guardian care commit, and peaceful leave before your feet.*

*In scenes exalted or depressed, you are our joy, and you our rest;
Your goodness all our hopes shall raise, adored through all our changing days.*

— Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751

